the weekly
Standard

JUNE 13, 2005

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AN AMERICAN GULAG?
KENNETH ANDERSON

NON? QUELLE HORREUR!
by Christopher Caldwell

MY E.U. VACATION
by P.J. O'Rourke

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the weekly Standard

THE WEEKLY STANDARD (ISSN 1083-3013) is published weekly (except the first week in January, third week in April, second week in July, fourth week in August, and the second week in November) by News America Incorporated, 1211 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10036. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. For subscription customer service in the United States, call 1-800-274-7293. For new subscription orders, please call 1-800-283-2014. Subscribers: Please send new subscription orders to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96153, Washington, DC 20090-6153; changes of address to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, P.O. Box 96127, Washington, DC 20077-7767. Please include your latest magazine mailing label. Allow 3 to 5 weeks for arrival of first copy and address changes. Yearly subscriptions, $78.00. Canadian/foreign orders require additional postage and must be paid in full prior to commencement of service. Canadian/foreign subscribers may call 1-902-563-4723 for subscription inquiries. Visa/MasterCard payment accepted. Cover price, $3.95. Back issues, $3.95 (includes postage and handling). Send letters to the editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th Street, N.W., Suite 505, Washington, DC 20036-4617. For a copy of THE WEEKLY STANDARD Privacy Policy, visit www.weeklystandard.com or write to Customer Service, THE WEEKLY STANDARD, 1150 17th St., NW, Suite 505, Washington, D.C. 20036. Copyright 2005, News America Incorporated. All rights reserved. No material in THE WEEKLY STANDARD may be reprinted without permission of the copyright owner. THE WEEKLY STANDARD is a trademark of News America Incorporated.

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Another Anti-Bush Factoid Bites the Dust

The favorite gotcha talking-point of the lefty-with-a-conscience crowd—that the abortion rate went *up* under the presidency of George W. Bush after falling under Bill Clinton—turns out to be bogus. For an extremely thorough debunking you should check out the article "The Biography of a Bad Statistic" at the Annenberg Public Policy Center's *FactCheck.org* site (*factcheck.org/article330.html*).

The progenitor of the claim was Glen Harold Stassen, an ethics professor at Fuller Theological Seminary (and son of the perennial presidential candidate Harold Stassen). Last October on the website of *Sojourners* magazine, Stassen published a short piece, "Pro-life? Look at the fruits." After noting that he was "trained in statistical analysis," Stassen allowed that the data were spotty but asserted that there were still enough to "identify trends": namely, "Under President Bush, the decade-long trend of declining abortion rates appears to have reversed. Given the trends of the 1990s, 52,000 more abortions occurred in the United States in 2002 than would have been expected before this change of direction. How could this be?"

We'll simplify: Because President Bush isn't a liberal, he failed to provide "health care, health insurance, jobs, child care, and a living wage" for all Americans. The ensuing economic stresses convinced more women to put the "off" back in "offspring." As Stassen reasoned, "women worry about health care for themselves and their children. Since 5.2 million more people have no health insurance now than before this presidency—with women of childbearing age overrepresented in those 5.2 million—abortion increases." By this logic, not to put too fine a point on it, Ted Kennedy is one of America's leading pro-lifers, and George W. Bush a veritable Herod.

Needless to say, Stassen's statistics were like catnip for Democrats. As the *FactCheck.org* article notes, Hillary Clinton, John Kerry, and Howard Dean were prominent in touting the Bush-abortion connection. Among other examples, "in an interview on NBC's *Meet the Press* on January 30, 2005, Sen. John Kerry claimed that abortions were up, period: Kerry: 'And do you know that in fact abortion has gone up in these last few years with the draconian policies that Republicans have?' A Kerry spokesman confirmed at the time to *FactCheck.org* that Kerry was relying on the Stassen article for his information."

The Annenberg fact-checkers continued: "As recently as May 22, 2005, Democratic National Committee chairman Howard Dean also asserted on NBC News's *Meet the Press*: Dean: 'You know that abortions have gone up 25 percent since George Bush was President?' Dean's 'statistic' went unchallenged by moderator Tim Russert, so millions of viewers probably got the impression that Dean's very specific 25 percent figure was correct. But Dean was wrong—and by a wide margin. We asked the Democratic National Committee repeatedly where Dean got his 25 percent figure, but we got no response. Even if Stassen's estimate of 52,000 additional abortions were correct, that would figure to an increase of less than 4 percent. And in any case the rate is going down, not up, according to the most authoritative figures available."

The *FactCheck.org* piece is well worth reading in its entirety. As they note, statistics on abortion rates are not ironclad. But "Stassen's numbers, and the widespread acceptance they seemed to be getting, prompted the Guttmacher Institute to conduct a special analysis to update its comprehensive census of abortion providers." Guttmacher, no friend of the Bush administration, found "that the number of abortions *decreased* nationwide—by 0.8 percent in 2001 and by another 0.8 percent in 2002. The abortion *rate*, which is the number of women having abortions relative to the total population, also decreased 1 percent in 2001 and 0.9 percent in 2002." ♦

Deep Throat—the View from Iran

Like THE SCRAPBOOK, you too may be suffering from an advanced case of Media Self-Infatuation Overload Syndrome, aka "Enough already about 'Deep Throat' and the saviors of civilization at the *Washington Post*." Although we must admit that it was amusing to learn that the famous anonymous source who worked hand-in-glove with the sainted investigative reporters of liberal myth to bring down Nixon was in fact a top aide to liberal bogeyman J. Edgar Hoover, aggrieved that Nixon hadn't picked him to succeed Hoover atop the FBI.

And in case you were wondering if the unveiling of the source would shut up the conspiracy theorists, we have one word for you: Ha! You may or may not be surprised to learn, for

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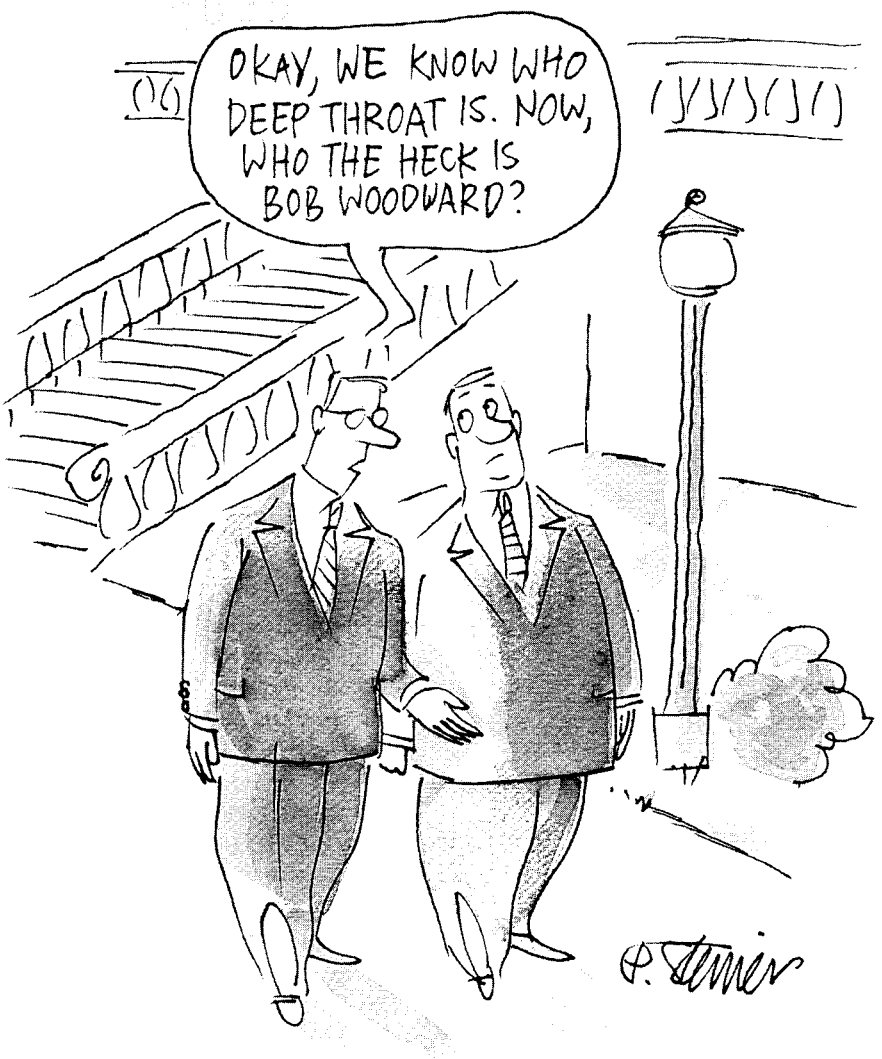

instance, that Iranian TV has uncovered a deep malevolent force underlying Nixon's woes. That's right: the J-double-o-z's. According to the good folks at the Middle East Media Research Institute, the Iranian News Channel (IRINN) has discovered that the "Jewish Lobby Set Watergate Trap for Nixon."

IRINN Reporter: "Today, it has become clear that Nixon's dispute with Israel and the Zionist lobby was among the main causes for his downfall. In fact, the reporters who exposed the Watergate affair and blew it out of proportion were Zionists, recruited to the ranks of the Zionist lobby. By using the media as its tool, Zionism tried to get one of its main opponents out of the way. . . . Along with Kennedy, [Nixon] is considered a victim of a major political coup carried out by the Zionist lobby."

You can view this lunacy at *www.memritv.org/search.asp?ACT=S9&P1=689.* ♦

Congratulations!

The seventh annual Eric Breindel Award for Excellence in Journalism has been awarded to Claudia Rosett for her peerless—and tireless—reporting on the scandalous palm-greasing and bribery engaged in by Saddam Hussein's Iraqi regime under the U.N. Oil-for-Food program. Rosett's award-winning writings on the subject have appeared in many publications, including THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

Sponsored by the Eric Breindel Memorial Foundation, and generously supported by News Corporation, Breindel's longtime employer and this magazine's corporate parent, the award is the richest honor in opinion journalism, carrying a prize of $10,000. It is presented each year to the columnist or editorialist whose work best reflects the spirit that animated Breindel's own writing: love of country, commitment to democratic institutions, and determination to bear witness to the evils of totalitarianism. ♦

THE SCRAPBOOK's Decline and Pratfall

We must shamefacedly retract last week's item—"The BBC's Decline and Further Decline"—which unfavorably compared the BBC's coverage of the International Institute for Strategic Studies annual report to Reuters's coverage of the same. The BBC story that THE SCRAPBOOK mocked was actually a year old, from May 25, 2004, and covered the release of the IISS's "Strategic Survey 2003/04." ♦

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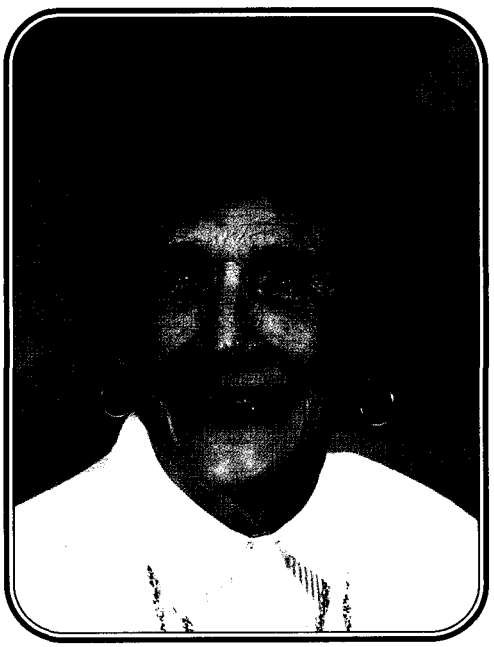
Casual

Rosa Miller Barnes, 1915-2005

My mother, Rosa Miller Barnes, was the Billy Graham of our family. With my dad's help, she converted all of us to orthodox Christianity. Her approach was not to deliver a sermon or drag everyone off to church or insist we read a religious book or tract. It wasn't that she was shy about discussing her faith. She could explain with great clarity what being a follower of Jesus Christ meant in her life. But she never pushed her faith on anyone. If she found someone wasn't receptive, she changed the subject to one of mutual interest. She was never judgmental. She was always patient.

We fell like dominos, first my sister, Rosa, and her husband, Jack Isleib, then their two kids, Mary Alice and John. Next was my daughter Karen, who became a Christian at age 9. My mother was subtle. She sent Karen to vacation Bible school when she visited her grandparents in the summer, and she took Karen to church. After two years of this, she gently asked Karen if she'd like to accept Christ as her savior. Karen said yes. My wife, Barbara, and I and our three other children took the plunge several years later. But that's not the end of it. My sister and her husband went into full-time ministry, founding an organization called Christian Outreach International that's active around the world from Kiev to Chihuahua. Their children became preachers as well. My kids would bring their friends along to Christian youth group meetings, where they were converted. My mother was the cause of all of this. The ripple effects of her life were extraordinary. Her legacy will be felt forever.

She had a very simple evangelical tool. It was the way she lived her life. There's an old Christian rule of thumb about the priorities of life. God is first, others are second, I'm third. My mother exemplified the "I'm third" approach. It was difficult to get her to talk about herself.



When she was forced to, she'd switch subjects as quickly as possible, usually by asking the person she was talking to about his or her life. This invariably worked, even with family members.

She never complained, except jokingly about the bruises that showed up on her legs as a result of blood thinning medicine. She grew up an Army brat. Her father and brother and the man she married were West Pointers. When I decided against West Point, she was upset, but she never told me so. Sons seek the approval of their father, but they want their mother to be a cheerleader. My mother was a cheerleader for me and for many of my friends.

For almost two decades, my mother and father worked in lay ministry. One at a time, they'd collect at their house people beset with pain, trouble, sorrow, or all three. My parents offered counsel, prayer, healing, and friendship, and often a bed to sleep in. When my family visited, we'd encounter strangers who'd drop in any time, day or night, to see my parents, especially my mother. One of her skills was to be a sympathetic listener. Rather than dispensing advice, she offered encouragement while discreetly steering them toward faith in Christ.

I was lucky to be her son. We were interested in the same subjects except for one. She didn't care about sports. But she loved to talk about her faith, her family, and politics. She followed politics closely, liked the Bushes, Jeb especially, and was fond of her congressman, Dave Weldon. Last year, she broke her habit of never grumbling or grousing. She complained about John Kerry.

My mother never wanted to impose. When she and I would talk on the phone, she'd have written a list of things she wanted to ask about. That way she felt the conversation would be organized and wouldn't take up too much of my time. After my wife and I bought a house near her in Vero Beach, Florida, in 2001, she would drop by nearly every day for a visit. The moment she walked in the door, she'd announce, "I can't stay." Sure enough, after 30 minutes she'd get up and leave. I wasn't there for her last visit. She came by to have lunch with Karen and my sister. As she walked to her car afterwards, one of her legs gave out and she fell. An ambulance was called. As it drove away, she lifted her head from the stretcher, waved, and said, "Thanks. I had a wonderful time." She died the next day, three months short of her 90th birthday.

Fred Barnes

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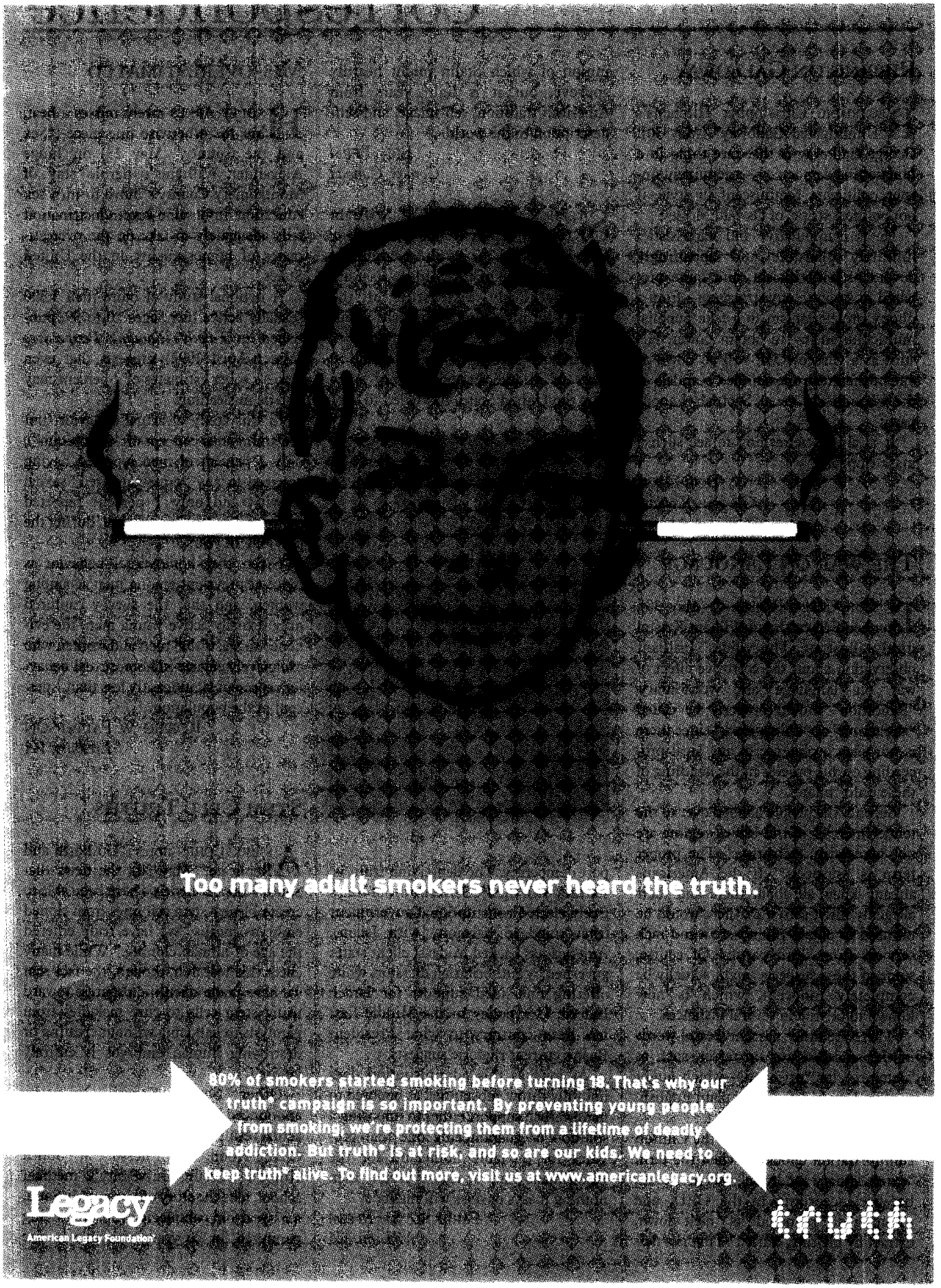

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Ripping on Galloway

Regarding Christopher Hitchens's "Unmitigated Galloway" (May 30): George Galloway is that rare thing in a functioning democracy—a genuinely sinister politician, reminiscent in style, if not political stripe, of Oswald Mosley.

He is manipulative and narcissistic; infinitely plausible and appallingly devoid of self-criticism; and quite prepared to stoop to any stratagem—from a phony proletarianism to a fake populist multiculturalism—to obtain power. His stint as a Glasgow MP will go down as one of the great unexamined scandals of the boundlessly venal Scottish Labour party.

It is always refreshing to see such a mask ripped.

Bob Davis
Glasgow, Scotland

The War on Language

In "Our Uzbek Problem" (May 30), Stephen Schwartz and William Kristol nicely illustrate Thucydides' brilliant observation about the corrosive effect of war on language and vocabulary. "Rendition" should properly be called "abduction" or "kidnapping," since there is not even a pretense of any legal proceeding or due process in the handling of these unfortunates.

Second, the people handed over to the tender mercies of the Uzbek regime are not necessarily "terrorists." The proper term is "suspects." If the Americans already knew all about them and their allegedly illicit activities, there would be no need to obtain thumbscrew and rack services from third parties. Of course, some of these suspects might actually be completely innocent, which is now known to be true in several instances.

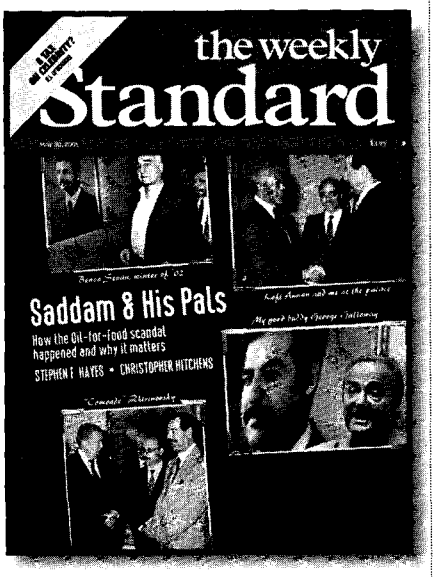
There are other nascent weasel words in the so-called war on terror, such as "detainee" for "prisoner"—which ought to offend every defender of plain English. Someone should compile a list.

I wonder if somebody in the Clinton administration chuckled when the term "extraordinary rendition" was first used, because, according to the OED, one meaning of "rendered" is "melt down, extract by melting, clarify." That is a definition of which Stalin might heartily approve, but it is light years from American tradition, self-image, and self-description to the world.

Eric Fern
Comox, Canada

Stephen Schwartz and William Kristol's excellent analysis of "Our Uzbek Problem" is a solid example of why the people of the Middle East are contemptuously distrustful of the Bush administration's rhetoric about democracy.

The sorry record of Uzbekistan and 50 years of Middle Eastern history show how the United States has failed to support democracy. The depressing truth is, starting with the 1953 overthrow of Iran's freely elected constitutional government (that ruled in harmony with Islam), America has backed Mideast client states governed by authoritarian dictators while offering one-sided support for Israel. Indeed, U.S. policy in the Middle East has been contrary to what President Bush's current rhetoric suggests.



As long as this administration does not fully throw substantial, as opposed to mere verbal, support either to imposing a solution or guaranteeing one that provides for a viable homeland for the Palestinians and a secure Israel, then nothing it says or does will matter.

Fariborz S. Fatemi
McLean, VA

Mis-overestimated

Hadley Arkes rarely misses a beat, but his otherwise fine piece ("Sex and the County," May 23) on Judge Alexander Williams's heroic stay of Montgomery County's move to turn sex education into same-sex indoctrination fails adequately to take on the overestimates of homosexuality in the United States.

A national study of more than 3,300 sexually active men, ages 20 to 39, published in *Family Planning Perspectives* (March-April 1993) suggests that even Arkes's sober estimates of 2 percent may also be misleading.

In this study of actual behavior (not the ambiguous concept of "orientation"), only 2 percent of men reported having engaged in any "same-gendered" sexual activity, and only 1 percent reported being exclusively homosexual, during the previous 10 years.

Given that homosexual behavior is twice as prevalent among men as among women, and that the survey captured only sexually active young men, the evidence suggests that men and women who exclusively engage in homosexual behavior represent significantly less than 1 percent of the population.

Robert W. Patterson
Leesburg, VA

Stem Cell Truths

As Eric Cohen notes ("Go Forth and Replicate," May 30), the news that South Korean scientists have been able to create 11 new stem cell lines from cloned embryos means "we have truly entered the age of human cloning." While many cheer this research, though, the fact that we have made scientific progress toward using stem cells to cure maladies from paralysis to leukemia without creating or destroying human embryos is entirely ignored.

Other South Korean scientists announced last year, to much less fanfare, actual results using adult stem cells. Song Chang-Hoon, a professor at South Korea's Chosun University's medical school, tells the story of Hwang Mi-Soon, a 37-year-old paraplegic, who, after being paralyzed for 20 years, was able to rise

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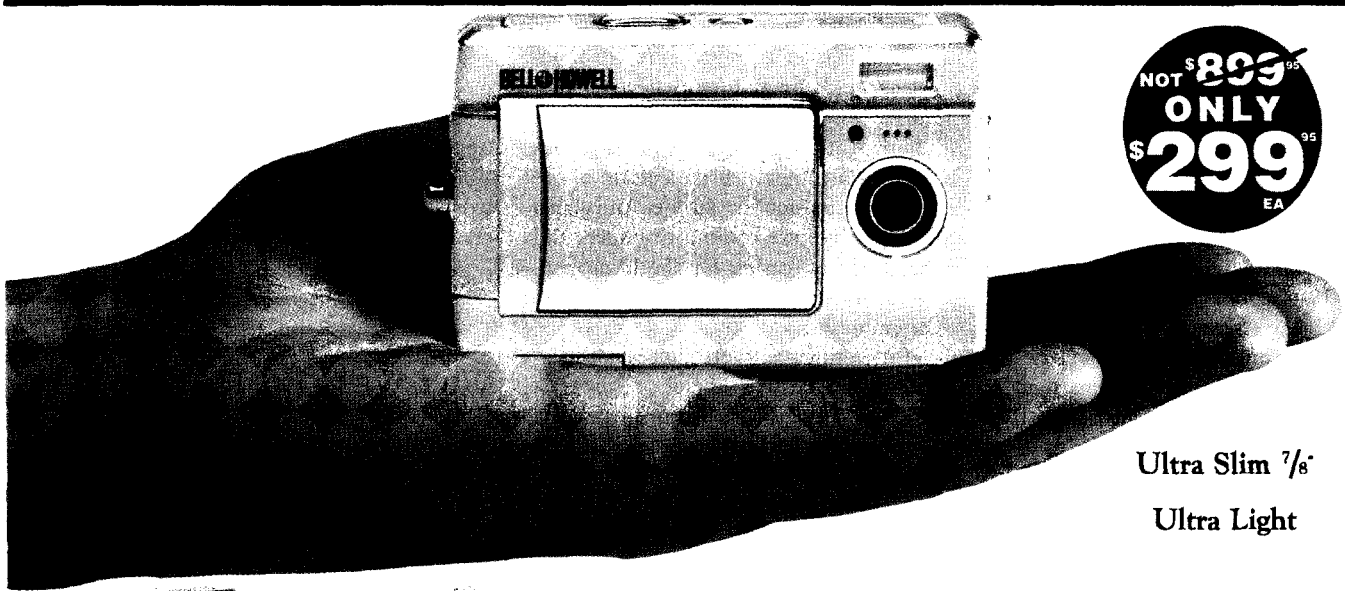

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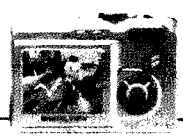
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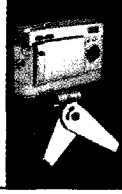

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from her wheelchair and take a few cautious steps with the aid of a walker six weeks after undergoing a transplant using umbilical cord blood stem cells.

Here at home, at least three young American women, Laura Dominguez, Susan Fajt, and Melissa Holley, who suffered paralysis resulting from spinal cord injuries, have regained muscle control thanks to a procedure using adult stem cells taken from their own nasal tissue.

Americans may not have heard about them, even though on July 14, 2004, Fajt and 19-year-old Dominguez testified before the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Science, Technology, and Space. They are among more than 20 patients successfully treated with their own adult stem cells by Dr. Carlos Lima, a neuropathologist at Egaz-Moniz Hospital in Lisbon, Portugal.

There are almost 80 therapies using adult stem cell—actual treatments, not theory or research. There have been over 250 adult stem cell clinical trials. There are zero treatments using embryonic stem cells, and there have been zero clinical trials.

The simple truth is that most progress in stem cell research is being made using the adult rather than the embryonic variety. The liberal press and the liberal media are largely ignoring that fact, while portraying opponents of embryonic stem cell research as heartless Bible-thumpers prolonging human suffering.

DANIEL JOHN SOBIESKI
Chicago, IL

CONSERVATIVES CONSERVE

WILLIAM PEDERSEN rightly identifies missed opportunities for conservative leadership in the national environmental movement ("The Shrinking of the Greens," May 30). In my 21 years on the staff of America's largest membership-based environmental group (and seven years as CEO), I have seen quiet conservative leadership on many issues. For example, fiscal conservatives oppose wasteful federal subsidies of programs that also damage the environment.

Free market entrepreneurs are innovating market-based, cost-effective solutions to environmental problems. Thoughtful pro-life conservatives embrace a comprehensive culture of life that includes nonhuman life. And social conservatives are coming to understand that common caring for the local environment helps build stronger human communities.

Environmental protection is not inextricably linked to a liberal or "progressive" ideology, as some believe. Conservatism and environmentalism are both ready to be transformed by creative conservative approaches to the environmental challenges we face.

MARK VAN PUTTEN
President, Stewardship Project
Reston, VA

KEEPING THE DEAD ALIVE?

IN WESLEY J. SMITH'S "The English Patient" (May 30), I notice that Smith never flatly states that the British NHS will, in fact, deny intravenous food and water to Leslie Burke. Instead, the NHS makes the reasonable case that it reserves the right to make a medical decision when the need arises.

What exactly is the alternative that Smith proposes? Does he argue for strict personal autonomy in these decisions? What if my personal decision is to remain on intravenous feeding after those "heartless" doctors have declared me to be dead? Lazarus, as we know, was raised miraculously after three days in the tomb. What if I insist on three years of postmortem care?

Hordes of well-wishers outside Terri Schiavo's hospice were willing to wait for a "miracle" that would keep her alive. What if she had decided that she would be willing to wait three years for a "miracle" that would bring her back from a "temporary" state of death?

I wish this were a preposterous example, but in a country where more people believe in the virgin birth than in evolutionary biology, it is all too real.

Should medical resources be committed without limit based on a patient's dictate with no regard to "medical" opinion?

JOHN CARRAGEE
Wayne, PA

WILL WE COME HOME?

DAVID GELERNTER'S "Bible Illiteracy in America" (May 23) aptly takes on the ignorance of many of today's youths concerning the Bible.

Having been raised on the Word of God, it sickens my heart today to see secularists trying to eradicate all knowledge of the Word from the public arena. It is their loss, but we lose, too, when we who know what is noble and good watch in disbelief as those truths are desecrated by today's cultural advocates. Gelernter is right when he says if college students hungering for the truth are led to the Bible, they will be filled with "excitement and exhilaration," knowing that they have indeed "come home."

JOANNA K. SENTERS
San Diego, CA

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the weekly Standard

Clearing the Airwaves

Extravagance of language, swelling sometimes to full-throated verbal hysteria, is a defining quality of today's politics. Even so, we confess to being surprised at the cascades of abuse that have recently fallen about the ears of Kenneth Tomlinson, the chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Tomlinson is a bit taken aback too, apparently—though so far he shows no signs of withering under the assault. Good for him.

President Clinton appointed Tomlinson to the CPB board in 2000, and President Bush lifted him to the chairmanship three years later. During his time on the board, which oversees and underwrites public television and radio, he's taken an interest in the issue of "objectivity and balance." He's supposed to—it's right there in Section 19 of the Public Telecommunications Act: "The Board of Directors of the Corporation shall . . . review, on a regular basis, national public broadcasting programming for quality, diversity, creativity, excellence, innovation, objectivity, and balance." This provision of the act, which was passed in 1992 by a Democratic Senate and a Democratic House of Representatives, is an elementary exercise in bureaucratic hygiene. Any government agency that touches on controversial subjects, as public broadcasting inevitably will, should cast a wide net, ideologically, if it is to count on the continued good will of the taxpayers and the lawmakers who allocate their money to pay for it.

Tomlinson, who oversees a government program funded through the political process by 535 politicians, is accused of "politicizing" his agency.

So far, so normal, you might think. "How," Tomlinson asks, "could any segment of the American people be opposed to commonsense balance?"

Oh, but people do object, lots of them, and in the overwrought terms typical of today's polemicists. A writer for the liberal magazine *American Prospect* called Tomlinson a "commissar of political correctness" bent on "Soviet-style partisan patronage, cronyism, and abuse." "The conservative attack on independent journalism has begun to spread," said a columnist for the Cox newspaper chain. Writing in the *Boston Globe*, a host of an NPR talk show also saw shadows of "Soviet-era Moscow" in Tomlinson's quest for balanced programming. The *St. Petersburg Times* editorialized against an "ideology-driven attempt to demonize and regulate one of the nation's most trusted news sources." The editorialists at the *New York Times* accused Tomlinson, who oversees a government program funded through the political process by 535 politicians, of "politicizing" his agency. Besides, the *Times* said, "there was a time when a passionate conservative might have looked at PBS programming and called it too liberal. But those days seem long past." Noted.

The *Times*'s editorial writers were clumsily trying to make a point that was far more colorfully made a week later by Bill Moyers, the public television star, in a remarkable speech to a gathering of leftist journalists called the National Conference on Media Reform. "We're seeing unfold a contemporary example of the age-old ambition of power and ideology to squelch and punish journalists who tell the stories that make princes and priests uncomfortable." The storyteller Moyers was referring to, the fearless little fellow sticking it to all those princes and priests, was himself. On the other side, trying to censor him, were "people obsessed with control, using the government to threaten and intimidate . . . the people who are hollowing out middle-class security even as they enlist the sons and daughters of the working class in a war to make sure Ahmad Chalabi winds up controlling Iraq's oil, . . . the people who squelch free speech in an effort to obliterate dissent . . . " And especially the people who think Bill Moyers is biased.

With all the hysteria swirling about, it is anti-climactic to list what precisely Tomlinson has done to monitor and ensure balance on the government-funded airwaves. Not a lot, as it turns out. In 2003, Tomlinson heard

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several complaints—some of them made by senators in a hearing of the Senate commerce committee—about Moyers's show *Now with Bill Moyers*. So he hired an outside consultant to assess the ideological range of guests on the show, in accordance with Section 19. Then he decided public broadcasting could use a pair of ombudsmen, so he hired a former White House official to draw up their job descriptions and guidelines. Then he hired the ombudsmen: William Schulz, formerly of *Reader's Digest*, and Ken Bode, formerly of NBC News. Their task, in the tradition of ombudsmen everywhere, will be to write reports that almost nobody will pay attention to. And last, Tomlinson encouraged the creation of two programs showcasing politically conservative hosts, *The Journal Editorial Report* and *Tucker Carlson: Unfiltered*, to balance out the leftward tilt of shows like *Now* and *Frontline*.

Tomlinson may fail as a commissar, but he makes an excellent overseer for PBS and NPR. All along, he has said his goal is to protect public broadcasting—from the excesses of its own practitioners, if necessary—by resisting the leftward impulses that, unchecked, could endanger support from a politically diverse public. "It was my responsibility as CPB chairman to preserve public support for public broadcasting by doing something about the bias," he wrote recently. Rather than the mortal enemy his critics claim, Tomlinson may be public broadcasting's best friend. For in one sense he is simply doing what the manager of a bureaucratic institution is supposed to do: finding a strategy to keep his agency alive for the long-term.

In a larger sense, however, the abuse of Tomlinson points to something more ominous for public broadcasting: the difficulty, perhaps even the impossibility, of maintaining government-funded media in a cultural landscape that is crisscrossed with political tripwires. We live in a remarkably touchy and thin-skinned time, and the controversy touched off by Tomlinson's mild reforms is as predictable as it is tedious. The statutory mandates for "balance and objectivity," not to mention for "excellence" and "quality," may be beyond enforcing in an era when the country's loudmouths, on the left and the right, refuse to agree on anything. (By the way, if PBS is so committed to "excellence," why does it still show those Peter, Paul, and Mary concerts?) But that's an argument for privatization—cutting public broadcasting loose from its government lifeline altogether. Public broadcasters should be careful what they wish for. If Ken Tomlinson fails today, more people will be arguing for privatization tomorrow.

—Andrew Ferguson, for the Editors

REMEMBER THAT JOINT SOME OF US "EXPERIMENTED" WITH?

WELL, IT'S TWICE AS STRONG TODAY.

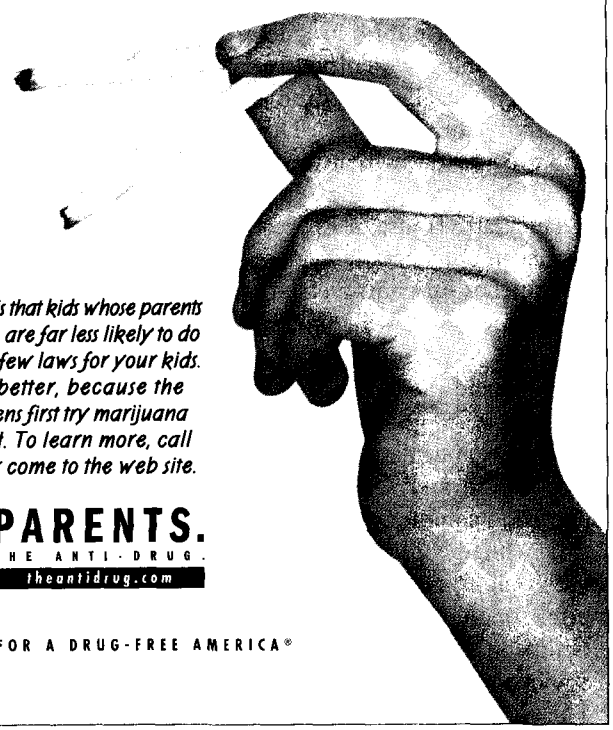
Reliable evidence shows that marijuana today is more than twice as powerful on average as it was 20 years ago. The fact is, pot today has twice the concentration of THC, the chemical that affects the brain.

So even if you did pot when you were younger, there's nothing hypocritical about trying to keep your kid off it.

Many studies have shown what can happen to kids who regularly smoke marijuana:

- *decreased ability to learn*
- *impaired judgment about driving or sex*
- *symptoms of depression, even thoughts of suicide*
- *breathing problems*
- *greater exposure to cancerous chemicals than from tobacco*
- *increased likelihood of using even more dangerous drugs*

But the good news is that kids whose parents get involved with them are far less likely to do drugs. So lay down a few laws for your kids. And the sooner the better, because the average age when teens first try marijuana is under 14 years old. To learn more, call 1-800-788-2800 or come to the web site.



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An American Gulag?

Amnesty International disgraces itself.

BY KENNETH ANDERSON

"IT'S AN ABSURD ALLEGATION," said President Bush. Vice President Cheney said he was "offended by it." Donald Rumsfeld said the charge was "reprehensible." And Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Richard B. Myers called it "absolutely irresponsible."

With the release of its 2005 human rights report, Amnesty International got all the headlines that even an organization that lives for press attention could possibly hope to get. It did so by lobbing rhetorical hand grenades—each delivered in press statements but, revealingly and characteristically, not found in the text of the report itself. A strategy, that is, of maximum press exposure today for charges that do not actually figure in the document that will constitute AI's historical archive tomorrow. "Who controls the past controls"—well, no doubt Amnesty's Inner Party knows that particular aphorism and its provenance.

First came AI secretary general Irene Khan's press statement releasing the report in London, which announced that the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo "has become the gulag of our times." That she meant the word *gulag* in its original sense—Stalin's camps in the Soviet Union through which millions upon millions of political prisoners passed and where many died—is underlined by the reference in her next sentence to Guantanamo evoking "images of Soviet repression." When the *Washington Post* editorial page, among many others, refused to countenance a comparison of such profound incomparables, she responded in a letter accusing it, astonishingly, of quibbling over semantics.

The "gulag" characterization was accompanied, however, by another allegation, nearly unnoticed in the press, yet if anything more outrageous in its implications. So-called "ghost detentions" by the United States, Khan said, do not merely evoke "images of" Stalin's camps. They actually "bring back" the "practice of 'disappearances' so popular with Latin American dictators in the past." Amnesty thus accuses the United States government of "disappearing"—kidnapping and secretly murdering—people. On what evidence? Well, none in Amnesty's actual report—but, in the press conference, it was said to be on the basis of not reporting all detainees, even ones who are *not* (in a perfectly defensible even if, to Amnesty, disagreeable reading of the Geneva Conventions) actual POWs who must be reported to the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Then there was the remarkable call by William Schulz, Amnesty International's USA executive director, in his own press conference, for foreign governments to investigate and arrest U.S. officials, should they venture abroad, for their alleged complicity in torture. Apparently very serious stuff—the media certainly thought so. "Torture," however, in AI's expansive view includes even the mere holding of a detainee "incommunicado." Moreover, since AI apparently regards *all* the detainees as entitled to full POW protections under the Third Geneva Convention, any departure from mere "name, rank, and serial number" questions is, for it, grounds for foreign governments to arrest U.S. officials and military officers for war crimes. Suffice it to say that the United States does not agree that all detainees are entitled to Geneva protections, and to the extent that something as flimsy as this is the basis for Amnesty's call for foreign governments to make arrests of U.S. officials, those foreign governments might want to be very, very careful.

Schulz offered a long list of senior and junior officials, current and former, starting with President Bush, that he characterized as "high-level architects of torture." It was a charge dutifully, indeed enthusiastically, repeated by a media in thrall to its own predetermined "torture narrative" and therefore indifferent to asking AI, for example, what it actually views as torture. Or whether if captured alive, for example, terrorist mastermind Abu Zarqawi would likewise, in AI's view, be entitled to the full protections of the Third Geneva Convention even as his organization blows up more Iraqis in suicide bombings. "The apparent high-level architects of torture should think twice before planning their next vacation to places like Acapulco or the French Riviera," Schulz said, "because they may find themselves under arrest as Augusto Pinochet famously did in London in 1998."

So. Stalin's gulag, updated for our times. "Disappearances"—a term meaning, of course, the secret murder of detainees. And calls for the arrest by foreign governments of a long, long list of senior U.S. officials as "high level architects of torture"—oh, sorry, merely "apparent" architects of torture, but worthy of arrest by foreign governments just the same. Strong words for a press conference—and yet charges nowhere appearing in the actual report. Did reporters notice? Did any of them think to ask Amnesty International why it thought charges much more serious and

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inflammatory than anything in the AI annual report itself should be made merely as part of a press conference? Did any of them ask where the evidence for these extraordinary allegations was in the report just handed them? Did any of them ask about the legal basis for AI's view of the reach of the Geneva Conventions? Not as far as I could tell reviewing Google and Nexis.

But what to expect of reporters who seem to believe that they have heroically dug out vast evidence of U.S. government wrongdoing against detainees, when virtually all of it has been the government's own laborious record-keeping handed over to them on a silver platter? Never mind—score a PR hit for Amnesty International in the credulous, wanna-believe, suspension-of-disbelief world that is the mainstream media. The questions that reporters might have asked AI about its extraordinary accusations were instead directed at the Bush administration.

When I called and asked AI's press office why none of this was in the report itself, I was told that, after all, the report covered 149 countries and there simply wasn't room.

It has been hard to take Amnesty seriously for a long time, though the press, naturally, will be the last to grasp this fact. Amnesty has made serious factual mistakes—recall the scandal over the reporting of serious human rights violations in Guatemala that turned out to have been made from whole cloth by one of its researchers a few years ago. AI is a latecomer to the arcane world of the international law of war, and within the community of lawyers on these issues, its reputation is not very good—an amateur that depends largely on the ignorance of the press, its brand-name, and logo. In the United States, its leadership represents the far-left political fringe. And in Europe, it simply blows with the winds of fashionable left-wing politics. It has principles, to be sure, all no doubt deeply held—but they shift (and are deeply held, of course, even when shifting) with every breeze of leftish political fashion in Western Europe. One might say that Amnesty International is a *serially* principled organization.

Still, with this year's press conferences, AI has slithered over a very big cliff in credibility in the United States, if not in Europe. Julian Ku, the Hofstra international law professor who blogs at Opinio Juris (*lawofnations.blogspot.com*), maintains that Amnesty is "veering dangerously close to Noam Chomsky/Ramsey Clark-land here." Indeed—and I would add Michael Moore-land and even Lyndon LaRouche-land. AI has not merely veered but plunged deep into those fever swamps—and is proud of it, as befits an organization whose agenda is set on the populist far left of European politics.

If you really believe, as Amnesty does, that Guantanamo is a Stalinist gulag, then you ought really to believe that its authors are the genuine Stalinist article.

Other leading organizations in the human rights business have been by degrees more circumspect. Human Rights Watch, for example, may feel the same as AI but is more cautious and has called only for a special counsel to examine allegations against U.S. officials. But it, too, is entirely capable of publicity-seeking tantrums on these issues. HRW's latest world report, for instance, opens with an essay by its executive director, Kenneth Roth, which compares Sudan and the United States, Darfur and Abu Ghraib. Roth opens in lawyerly fashion, claiming that "no one would equate the two." He then spends the rest of the essay doing little else. Khartoum's violations are more extensive, while Washington's are actually more insidious because it is more powerful.

One is entitled to believe this, I suppose. But here's the rub. If you really believe, as Amnesty does, that Guantanamo is a Stalinist gulag, then you ought really to believe that its authors are the genuine Stalinist article—criminal leaders of a world-class criminal regime. After all, it is Stalins, Berias, and their henchmen who produce Stalinist gulags. Likewise, if you are Human Rights Watch and you really believe in the moral equivalence of Sudan and the United States, then surely you ought to regard U.S. leaders as nothing more than wicked criminals, to be arrested, and their regime isolated and sanctioned, if not actually invaded. Surely you should be urging the virtuecrats of Brussels and all of Europe to break off trade relations with the United States. You should be arguing for a breakup of NATO to isolate the human rights abuser, and perhaps even urging Europe to create the military might necessary to confront the deep evil of the U.S. regime. That's what morally serious people *should* be doing, after all, in dealing with Sudan and its leaders. We *should* be contemplating all that and more against the regime in Sudan. And if you *really* believe in the moral equivalence you rhetorically trumpet, then that's what a principled organization would demand regarding the United States, too.

But that's not what the human rights organizations do or say in the fine print, is it? On the contrary. Human Rights Watch wants the U.S. government to do many, many things on behalf of HRW's own agenda. Not merely mend its evil ways and stop torturing as HRW defines it—no, the group has an extensive action agenda for the world's wicked superpower and for its human rights abusing military, one that it wants Washington to get moving on right away, wicked or not. To start with, HRW has said that someone—preferably the U.N. Security Council, but failing that a coalition that must necessarily involve the United States—should intervene in Darfur.

There is much to be said for that position morally, and I admire Human Rights Watch for overcoming

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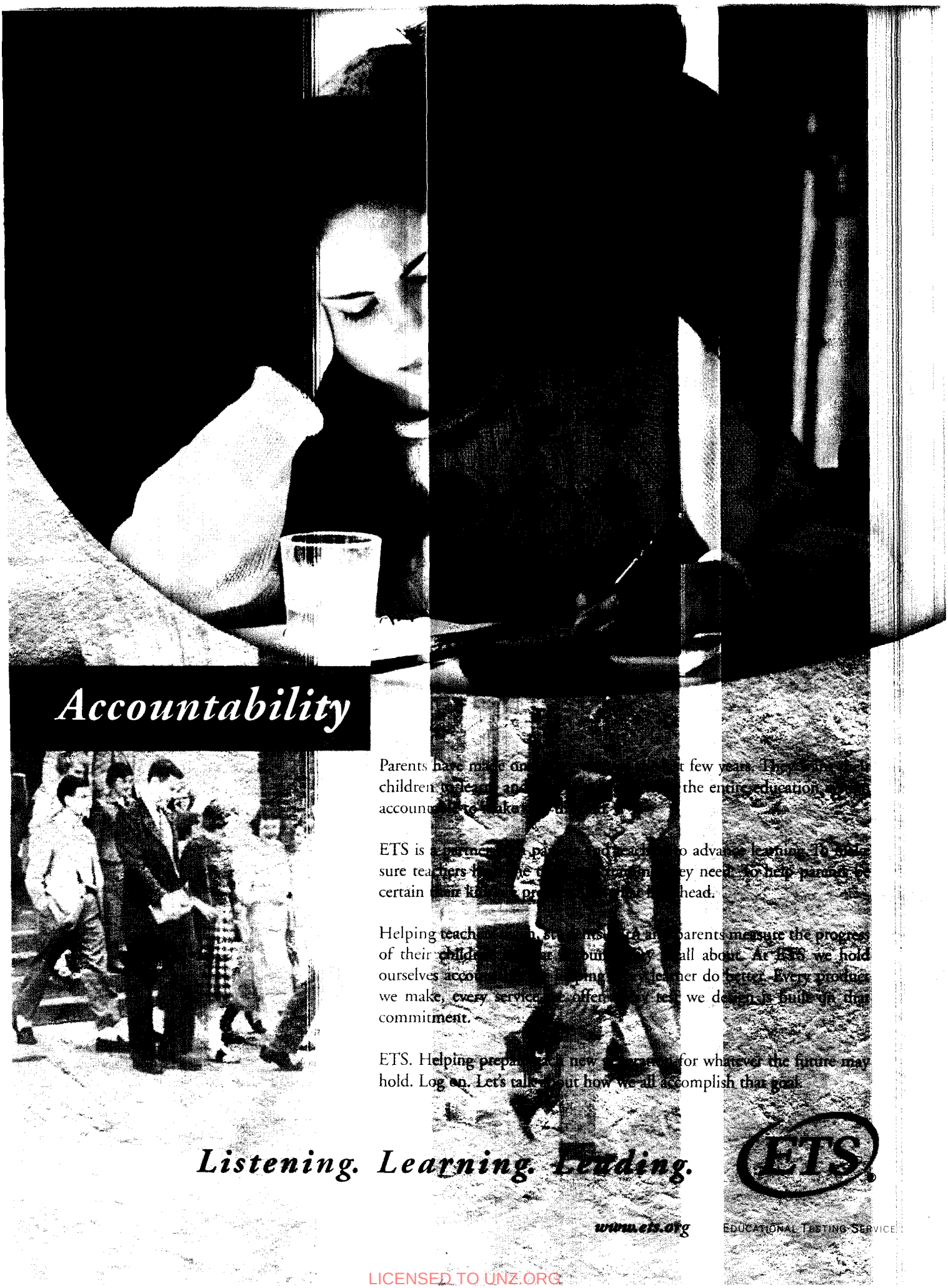

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its bias for international organizations and against ad hoc coalitions of the willing, in the interests of the people of Darfur. But if the United States is what HRW says it is, why would the arch-criminals—in Washington, that is—care about doing anything so obviously, well, *good*? Which is it to be? The United States government and its leadership are a gang of criminals who should be isolated, sanctioned, arrested, and condemned as in principle no better than the undeniably criminal Sudanese government—but, by the way, it would be excellent if the Great Satan would also mount its noble charger, rattle its weapons, gird up its loins, and intervene to defend the people of Sudan. Please report to the International Criminal Court's dock in The Hague to be tried for torture and war crimes and what-not—but on your way, could you stop by Darfur, using military force if necessary to protect the people from genocide, make sure the peace treaty ending the war in the south doesn't fall apart, and don't do anything that we might regard as unnecessary collateral damage (*we'll be watching*, and we'll add anything we don't like to the list of your crimes). And, oh yes, be sure to arrest and bring the wicked Sudanese leaders and militias along with you to The Hague, so they can be prosecuted after we finish with you.

There is something morally perverse about this. Can you really hold these positions simultaneously and still count yourself a human rights organization acting solely on principle? Unlikely. What it means in the real world, of course, is that these human rights organizations, whether Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch, simply indulge themselves in rhetorical overkill. They do not mean what they say.

Amnesty instinctively recognized this by putting its nonsensical charges in its press releases and not in its report. Human Rights Watch announces this horrific moral equivalence—then it calls merely for a special counsel to investigate further. Neither group means what it said, even though, like clockwork, letters to the editor will be received next week insisting that they really, really did. We, for our part, instinctively know better.

We also know that it is suicidally irresponsible for groups that depend on the moral force of their pronouncements to habitually say things they don't actually mean. Rhetorical inflation is a dangerous indulgence for the human rights movement. And it is a bad thing for the cause of human rights.

The world needs independent human rights organizations. Amnesty International may well have gone into a moral freefall of no return—and if so, it is an immense loss. Human Rights Watch is tempted in the same direction—tempted, to be precise, by the reports of its own virtue—but has not gone over the edge. Anyone who cares for human rights should hope deeply that it does not.

Because we need human rights groups with real moral authority, we should hope that the good ones will resist the temptation to wallow in their own unassailable virtue—to think that they are entitled, because of their inherent goodness, to believe six impossible things before breakfast. Which is why we need a press that is as willing to ask tough questions of the human rights organizations—to actually read their reports and notice what they have said and not said—as it is to go after the U.S. government. It is, at the end of the day, the best way to ensure that the world's nongovernmental watchdogs of morality themselves remain morally serious. ♦

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What Bush Owes Blair

The special relationship is a two-way street.

BY IRWIN M. STELZER

IT'S PAYBACK TIME in Washington. Britain's prime minister, Tony Blair, is coming to town to discuss the state of the world with President Bush: His steadfast support of Bush and America in Iraq entitles him to more than a friendly photo-op. Blair paid a heavy price at the polls for that support, and now has a parliamentary majority so reduced that some are calling for him to step down in favor of his chancellor, Gordon Brown. Which Blair will do sometime in the next four years, but, if he has his way, not before he realizes his ambition of creating "the enduring 21st-century welfare state."

But it is not only to reward Blair for facing down the Franco-German axis on Iraq that Bush has to offer tangible recognition. The president has to demonstrate to other nations that alliance with America begets a gratitude that goes beyond thank-you visits and speeches. After all, it is widely known that Poland and other countries that defied the dominant European powers to side with us are very unhappy—no contracts for Iraq's reconstruction, no trade advantages, nothing that the leaders of these countries can parade before their voters, most of whom opposed sending troops to Iraq.

It is safe to assume that the two men will spend little time sympathizing with the plight of Jacques Chirac, who is reeling from France's massive vote against the E.U. constitution. Or shed a tear for Gerhard Schröder, who seems to be headed for rejection by Germany's voters this fall. Blair's views of Chirac cannot be printed in a family magazine, and Schröder's anti-American, anti-Bush campaign still rankles in the White House.

Indeed, Bush and Blair might permit themselves a bit of a gloat, both having been reelected, along with Australia's John Howard, while voters are preparing to retire the leaders of the Franco-German antiwar, pro-Saddam axis.

Chortling done, the serious business of the meeting starts. Blair personally makes no claim to payback: He did what he thought was right when he leapt to America's side, still says he was right, and is willing to pay the domestic political price for his beliefs. Instead of asking for a *quid pro quo*, the prime minister wants to persuade the president that this is a historic moment—that we are witnessing the collapse of what Don Rumsfeld aptly called "Old Europe." In Blair's view the United States now has an opportunity to turn "New Europe," and sensible residents of France, Germany, and other countries, in what the prime minister's aides call "the right direction." They agree that America has done a great deal in recent months to restore the transatlantic relationship; that Europe now recognizes that its crisis is about Europe, not about the United States; and that the president's recent statements that America welcomes Europe's leadership role in dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions has gone down well. Now is the time, they think, for Bush to capitalize on those developments to convert Europe into an outward looking, pro-American ally, rather than a "sulking alternative pole of attraction."

In order to do that, to put the East European countries firmly on the path to market-based economies and pro-American foreign policies, Blair, who will be president of the E.U. for a six-month term starting in July, and chairman of the G-8, is hoping that the president will reach out to Europe at the G-8 conference next month in Edinburgh.

That will require Bush to support—indeed, to lead—in addressing two problems: climate change and African poverty.

Administration officials have long regretted the brusque manner in which they dismissed the Kyoto protocol, supposedly designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Not that the White House thinks the protocol makes any sense: Without the cooperation of China and India, emissions will increase. Besides, the reductions called for would cripple the U.S. economy—and are anyhow unattainable, as Blair found to his embarrassment when Britain failed to meet its own emission-reduction target.

Blair knows that the president does not find the data used by those who believe the earth is warming convincing. But he knows, too, that Bush is concerned about energy security, a good reason for wanting to reduce the use of emission-causing oil, and that the president "has a good story to tell."

America is spending more on clean coal technology, and on reducing the cost of nuclear power, than all of the other members of the G-8 combined. So Blair thinks it absurd that the United States should allow itself to be painted as an anti-environmental thug, opposed to efforts to prevent global warming. He wants Bush "to become part of the conversation," as one member of the Blair team puts it. That means using the G-8 meeting in Edinburgh to present an American alternative to Kyoto, including a plan to make clean coal technology available to China and India, both of which countries are planning to build

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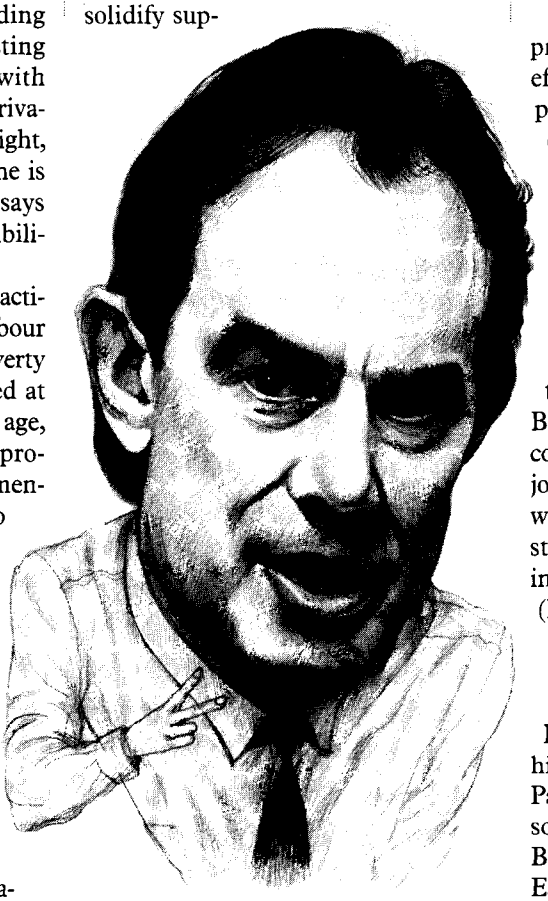
hundreds of new coal plants to meet the electricity needs of their rapidly growing economies.

Which brings us to Africa. Blair has two reasons for wanting to tackle the problem of that continent's poverty. The first is pure Blair: It is the right thing to do. Those who know the prime minister know that he may vacillate when he is conflicted on an issue—he has trouble deciding whether to tackle crime by arresting bad guys or by sympathizing with them because of their "social deprivation"—but when he thinks he is right, he is immovable. And he thinks he is on firm moral ground when he says that richer nations have a responsibility to eliminate poverty in Africa.

Blair's second reason is more practical. The restive left wing of his Labour party has always supported antipoverty and development programs aimed at bringing Africa into the modern age, no matter how ineffective those programs might be. With his parliamentary majority reduced because so many of his natural supporters opposed the Iraq war—he estimates that some 20 percent of these voters stayed away from the polls or voted for some other party—Blair needs to give his left something its members want.

So morality and practicality dictate attacking African poverty. Blair thinks that Bush can lead that attack, but not in the old-fashioned, support-your-local-dictator manner that swelled so many Swiss bank accounts. Instead, the prime minister wants the president to join him in an aid-for-accountability program. Just as we are at a historic moment in the future of Europe, so, too, in Africa. With aid as carrot, Blair believes we have a unique opportunity "to change the governance" of African nations. If America will make funds available—"a little bit of new money and some repackaging of old money, disbursed more quickly," as one Blair official put it—to nations willing to establish high standards of accountability, Africa can begin to end its awful history of poverty and war.

So this prime minister believes. He believes, too, that if Bush signs on to a leadership role, America's friends in Old Europe will have a weapon with which to fight the more numerous, anti-American Bush-haters who have dominated the political scene in France, Germany, Spain, and other countries. Even more important, Blair is convinced that America's willingness to join his Africa campaign will solidify support for America in New Europe. In return, he is prepared to argue that when the world measures America's commitment to the amelioration of poverty, the massive contributions of the U.S. private sector should be counted along with Washington's contribution. That quite appropriate change in measuring compassion, long advocated by neoconservatives such as my Hudson Institute colleague Carol Adelman, but resisted by Europe's left, would propel America to the top rank of international donors.



Whether Blair can persuade the president that we are indeed at a turning point in European history, and that he should seize the opportunity to reassert American values and leadership, is not at all certain. The president has to consider not only the validity of his friend's arguments, but the fact that Blair's success as E.U. president and G-8 chairman, and therefore his political standing at home, very much depends on whether he can rally the president to his cause. Payback time.

Finally, the prime minister will press the president to increase his efforts to persuade Congress that the protectionist road down which many of its members are traveling will have dire consequences not only for the American economy, but also for the U.S.-U.K. alliance. Of particular concern is the inclination on Capitol Hill to insert "buy American" requirements into defense contracts. Two countries that "have been through the fire together," as one Blair official put it, should be able to cooperate, especially in the case of the joint strike fighter, a project that Blair will tell Bush is characterized by a constant battle by the Brits to keep the information exchange a two-way street. (History buffs will see a repeat of the U.S.-U.K. relationship during the development of our atomic bomb.)

And one last chit-come-due. Blair needs the president to reaffirm his willingness to press Israel and the Palestinians to continue following the so-called road map. No problem for Bush, who is confident that his Middle East policy is succeeding, a confidence that Blair shares. Both men agree that Iraq is coming right, that the momentum provided by the elections, the formation of Iraq's first freely elected government, the drafting of a constitution followed by a referendum and then by new elections, will in the end overcome the deadly insurgency. And both are prepared to keep troops in Iraq as long as necessary. In addition, Blair is prepared to commit some 5,000 troops to Afghanistan, and, if the recent E.U.-NATO deal to pacify Darfur comes unstuck, other troops to end what Bush authorized then-secretary of state Colin Powell to call genocide. That would make it easier for Bush to respond to pressure from his allies on

Illustration by Earl Keleny

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the Christian right and his enemies among the African-American left to do the same.

An ambitious agenda for a relatively brief meeting. But two savvy conviction-politicians who share the same toothpaste, as Bush famously noted at one of their meetings, shouldn't need a lot of time to reach agreement on climate change, African relief, information-sharing, trade policy, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Darfur. ♦

While the Prince Is Away . . .

Saudi Arabia's religious police crack down.

BY PAUL MARSHALL

SINCE MAY 27, the Saudis have arrested eight Christians from India and seized documents naming others. One of those arrested, Chittirical John Thomas, was pulled away from work and beaten in front of his five-year-old son. He is reportedly in the Shemaissy Detention Center.

This followed the March 22 arrest in the Batha area of Riyadh of Indian pastor Samkutty Varghese by the religious police, the *muttawa*, for not ending a cell phone conversation when the call for Muslim prayer went out. Rev. Varghese, who went to Saudi Arabia as a tourist in January, was apparently not aware of rules forbidding calls at such times. He is still being held, and there are reports that he has been sentenced to ten months in prison, as well as to a flogging.

The *muttawa* were unusually busy while Crown Prince Abdullah was away in Texas visiting President Bush. On April 23, they arrested 40 Pakistani Christians who were engaged in a joint Catholic-Protestant meeting in a home. On April 29, they arrested five Christians from an Ethiopian and Eritrean group who had gathered for prayer.

Sources in Saudi Arabia believe that authorities there are using the information they have gathered from these raids in order to organize crackdowns elsewhere in the country. Saudi security officials are busily arresting people whose phone numbers were found in Rev. Varghese's diary.

Despite the Saudis' expressions of concern over press reports that U.S. officials at Guantanamo Bay desecrated Korans, their own security authorities have destroyed Bibles found among the victims' possessions, just as they destroyed religious artifacts found in a raid on a makeshift Hindu shrine found in an apartment in Riyadh on March 24.

Apart from persecution of Christian, Hindu, and other foreign workers, Saudi Arabia continues to persecute Shiites and other Muslims who do not follow the repressive Wahhabi version of Islam that is the state religion of the country. Authorities have arrested migrant workers for "allegedly practicing Sufism." And that's not all.

On May 15, three Saudi men—Ali al-Demaini, Abdullah al-Hamed, and Matruk al-Faleh—were sentenced to between six and nine years in jail for calling for a transition to a constitutional democracy. One of the charges against them was that they used "Western terminology" in seeking reforms. Essentially this was an accusation of blasphemy, with the clear implication that advocating democracy and human rights is somehow "un-Islamic."

The center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia reports that Demaini's wife, Fawzi Al-Ouni, says, "My husband received the harshest sentence because he had claimed that the al Qaeda violence that had been plaguing the country was the result of the dominance of the strict Wahhabi version of Islam in Saudi Arabia, to the exclusion of others." Saudi Arabia's persecution of people peacefully following their own beliefs belies all its claims and advertisements that it is curbing and combating religious hatred and extremism.

In September 2004, the State Department for the first time followed the recommendation of the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom that Saudi Arabia be designated a "Country of Particular Concern" under the International Religious Freedom Act. However, despite the fact that the State Department has reported that Religious Freedom "does not exist" in Saudi Arabia, it has so far declined to recommend any sanctions against the regime.

President Bush is currently winning much goodwill among Middle Eastern democracy activists for his continued push for political change, even by longstanding allies such as Egypt's President Mubarak. One reason that there is such ferment and debate is that reformers now believe, or hope, they can no longer be quietly dragged off to a cell while the world ignores them. If America now indicates that oil-producing allies such as Saudi Arabia are just too important to challenge, it will reinforce the region's authoritarians and dampen hopes for further change.

Hence, the United States should—at a minimum—follow the commission's recommendation and deny visas to Saudis who carry out or authorize violations of religious freedom, as well as those who propagate religious hatred. It should redouble investigations of Saudi funding and support for propagating religious hatred in the Muslim world and elsewhere, including in the United States. This would signal a genuine commitment to democracy and curtail one of the strongest threats to political freedom worldwide. ♦

Paul Marshall is a senior fellow at Freedom House's Center for Religious Freedom in Washington, and editor of the just-released Radical Islam's Rules: The Worldwide Spread of Extreme Sharia Law.

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The Merkel Manual

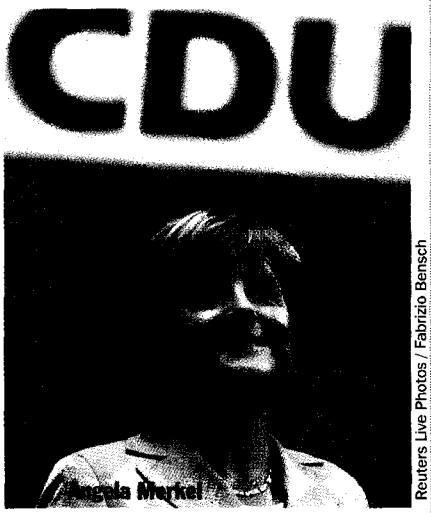
Just the prescription for Germany?

BY VICTORINO MATUS

FRIEDBERT PFLÜGER could barely contain himself. It was last April when I asked the foreign policy spokesman for Germany's Christian Democratic/Christian Social Union opposition alliance about elections taking place the following month in North Rhine-Westphalia. "The Social Democrats have governed that state for the past 39 years," he explained. "It is the core of the German blue-collar mentality." And if his Christian Democrats were to triumph there, "it would be the equivalent of New York and California going Republican."

On May 22, voters in North Rhine-Westphalia fulfilled Pflüger's dream, ousting the Social Democrats after nearly four decades of rule. Later that evening, with only 5 of 16 states remaining under his party's control, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder had this to say: "As a result of the bitter election result for my party in North Rhine-Westphalia, the political base for our continued work has been called into question." Schröder then announced his plan to move up nationwide elections from the fall of 2006 to this coming September, less than 100 days away.

Why Schröder, a political survivalist, decided to move up Election Day (in what amounts to a self-inflicted vote of no confidence) remains unclear. "Schröder won't allow Germany to enter a state of uncertainty," said Professor Gert Weisskirchen, a prominent Social Democrat and his party's foreign policy spokesman. "What is necessary is that we should speed up the reform process in Germany, and this is why the chancellor is now seeking a new mandate." Others, however, were skeptical. Matthias Rüb, a political correspondent for the *Frankfurter Allgemeine* and author of *Der atlantische Graben* (the Atlantic rift), called it a "desperate and bold move. Schröder is counting on his ability to win a beauty contest" against his opponent, a woman named Angela Merkel.



Reuters Live Photos / Fabrizio Bensch

On paper, Merkel is the ideal candidate. Born in Hamburg in 1954, she and her family actually moved to East Germany when she was still a child—her father, a Protestant pastor, was committed to preserving the faith behind the Iron Curtain. Merkel has degrees in both physics and quantum chemistry. Soon after the Berlin Wall came down, she became a Christian Democrat and a darling of then-chancellor Helmut Kohl, who named her environmental minister. In 2000, Merkel became chairwoman of the CDU, repairing the party's image after a devastating financial scandal. Two years later she assumed the chairmanship of the entire CDU/CSU coalition.

The reality of Merkel's rise to power, however, has not been so smooth. During her campaign for CDU chair, she referred to Kohl as an "old warhorse," upsetting many of her colleagues. In 2002, Merkel was practically forced not to run against Schröder, deferring instead to Bavaria's prime minister, Edmund Stoiber, who was then narrowly defeated. Critics also say Merkel lacks charisma and is a terrible public speaker. Professor Michael Werz, a German Marshall Fund Transatlantic fellow, believes that "if Schröder debates her one-on-one on television, he'll blast her away." But he is careful to add, "The question is whether or not that impression is going to last. I don't think so. Look at the current numbers—the conservatives are approaching an absolute majority."

Werz is right. A poll taken after Schröder's decision to move up the election indicated 49 percent of Germans would vote for the opposition CDU/CSU coalition while only 28 percent would reelect the Social Democrats. Another poll revealed that only 8 percent of Germans believe Schröder has a chance of winning. "That is the lowest percentage for any incumbent chancellor ever," says Torsten Krauel, the Washington political correspondent for *Die Welt*. "In a nutshell, Germans want early elections to topple the Schröder government, period."

This sentiment should not come as a surprise. Germany is suffering its worst unemployment—approximately 12 percent—since the Weimar Republic. GDP growth is expected to be a meager 0.7 percent this year. Companies such as Volkswagen and DaimlerChrysler have slashed thousands of jobs. SPD chairman Franz Müntefering, under fire for pressing economic reforms, blamed his country's stagnation on Goldman Sachs and other private-equity firms, describing them as "swarms of locusts that fall on companies, stripping them bare before moving on." Despite this rabble-rousing rhetoric, Müntefering con-

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tinues to get pelted with eggs (literally) by trade unionists.

Aware of Germans' sometimes violent reaction against reform, Merkel will most likely not announce any radical measures between now and Election Day. In fact, her Christian Democrats have already backpedaled on tax cuts and the liberalization of stringent German laws protecting labor. As Josef Joffe noted in the *Financial Times*, "Although they are basking in the warm glow of the polls, the besiegers are trapped. If Angela Merkel's Christian Democrats move to the right—say, towards labor market liberalization—they will face even more of the same anger that has savaged the SPD. If they move left, Mr. Schröder will clobber them as copycats."

Yet with polls indicating a strong desire for change, Schröder can clobber all he wants—Merkel will probably still win. The crucial moment comes afterward, when the Christian Democrats will have control over both houses of parliament for the next three to four years.

"They will probably go along the lines of the social economic reforms that the Social Democratic/Green government tried to start but couldn't finish," says Michael Werz. "I would also hope they bring German foreign policy back onto track. There were two German foreign policies, one between 1998 and 2002, which was reasonable and supportive, sending troops to Kosovo and Afghanistan, and being a good ally with the United States, and there was the post-2002 foreign policy, when the chancellor took it over from Joschka Fischer. I hope they will be reasonable and reinvigorate the Western alliance."

And as Torsten Krauel of *Die Welt* points out, "Even if each and every regular state election sees the SPD as a winner after September 18, the Social Democrats won't be in a position to block Merkel's bills in the upper house until 2010. Not since 1949 has any chancellor been in such a comfortable position. A Merkel government would have true leeway to reform Germany." ♦

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Jimmy Carter's Favorite Charity

A wildly expensive way to help small numbers of the non-poor. BY PHILIP CHALK

AN ORGANIZATION that normally welcomes press coverage of its bustling worksites and sweating volunteers, Habitat for Humanity has spent recent months in the awkward role of media target. News reports have tracked every move in a seedy executive-suite scandal that led to the January firing of the 29-year-old nonprofit's founder and president Millard Fuller over accusations of sexual harassment.

It wasn't the first time Fuller's hand had been slapped. When charges of unwelcome kissing and groping of female employees reached the organization's board in the early '90s, the evangelically-aligned group's most prominent supporter, former president Jimmy Carter, intervened on behalf of Fuller—a wealthy Georgian who was inspired to eliminate "poverty housing" while living in a commune in the 1970s. When the most recent charges arose, Carter again intervened, but this time the board ignored him and sent Fuller packing.

The matter now appears closed, despite lingering protests by volunteers and a legal spat over Fuller's effort to launch a new, similarly named organization. Habitat looks likely to retain its high-profile reputation as a cost-effective charitable endeavor, providing low-cost housing to America's homeless and poor.

Except that it isn't, and it doesn't. The hundreds of millions of dollars that Habitat raises and spends each year in this country—including large amounts from the federal government, philanthropic foundations, and corporate sponsors such as the Lowe's chain of hardware stores—benefit a relatively tiny number of people whose incomes are usually well above poverty levels. (The group builds about 6,000 houses a year.)

Habitat doesn't just give away houses. Beneficiaries first make a down payment of $500-$1,000 and commit to several hundred hours of work on their new homes alongside Habitat's trademark army of volunteers. A local, independently incorporated Habitat affiliate then typically provides a 20-year, interest-free mortgage and collects a monthly payment in the range of $250 to $300. The mortgage note is held by the affiliate, which usually retains a right of first refusal should the homeowner want or need to sell the property.

Though some numbers that might be used to evaluate Habitat's overall cost-effectiveness—total volunteer hours on-site or aggregated homeowner financial data, for instance—can be hard to come by, one number features prominently in Habitat's marketing: two. That is the officially reported percentage of Habitat homeowners who default on their loans and on whose houses the organization's local affiliates foreclose. To keep that number low, affiliates often offer financial-crisis services, but what they mainly do is look for candidates who are unlikely to default—candidates, in effect, who aren't that poor.

The Habitat affiliate in Coachella Valley, California, for instance, builds two houses that come with $80,000 mortgages each year and hasn't had a single foreclosure since its founding in the early 1990s, according to spokesperson Adrienne Kinsey. How? "Well, we do credit checks—we don't want someone who's going to default. I just tell [candidates] that they have to be able to make their mortgage payments," she says.

As do all Habitat affiliates, Kinsey's group looks for both an ability to pay and a need—in other words, a minimum and a maximum family income. In Coachella Valley, that means a range of $24,435 to $32,580 for a family of four. That range varies notably across the country, with the affiliate in Davidson, North Carolina, for instance, requiring incomes between $20,125 and $38,500.

Such incomes don't make for Forbes-list candidates, but neither do they constitute poverty. In 2004, the Poverty Threshold of the federal Bureau of the Census—the income level below which a family of four is considered impoverished—was just under $19,500. The sample Habitat requirements cited above miss it entirely, and the highest income allowed for a family of four—$38,500—actually exceeds 40 percent of U.S. households.

For a comparative measure, consider the Department of Housing and Urban Development's requirements for the main federal housing-subsidy program "Section 8," which dictate that most beneficiaries must have incomes lower than 30 percent of the median income for their area. By contrast, the Davidson, N.C., Habitat affiliate requires that candidates have incomes *higher* than 35 percent of the local median income. (God pity the households with incomes between 30 and 35 percent of the median: too rich for the federal subsidy; too poor for Habitat.)

What's going on here? Jerome Baggett, a sociologist at the Jesuit School of Theology at Berkeley, California, who has written on Habitat's field work and volunteer culture, puts it simply: Habitat is limiting its risk by "partnering with people with higher and higher and higher incomes." Baggett says he admires

Philip Chalk is THE WEEKLY STANDARD'*s production director.*

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Habitat's esprit de corps and its ability to get wealthier Americans "off their couches and swinging hammers," but it remains the case that Habitat's massive charitable enterprise benefits families that "would otherwise be middle-income in a few years anyway." Indeed, many beneficiaries already have incomes high enough to qualify for conventional mortgages from ordinary lenders.

Seen in this light, Habitat's basic sales pitch for its U.S. fundraising efforts begins to look misleading. The section of its website entitled "Why Habitat for Humanity Is Needed," for instance, begins with the sobering announcement that "millions of Americans face a housing crisis. In fact, 5.1 million American families have 'worst-case' housing needs." That may be, but how many of those 5.1 million families—about 4.5 percent of the U.S. total—is Habitat likely to help, given that it serves those above the bottom 20 percent in household income? A good guess: hardly any. Habitat talks about America's poor and homeless but lays out its money up the block.

That Habitat's benefits regularly fall to those other than the homeless and the poor is just one criticism leveled by Baggett, who complains also about the paternalism of Habitat towards its homeowners, including criticism of new owners who speak publicly of their plans to move beyond their Habitat home or who "don't act poor or grateful enough." The Habitat affiliates' right of first refusal, for example, which allows it to buy a house offered for sale during the lifespan of the mortgage for no more than its original cost, can be used to prevent homeowners from realizing gains until their mortgage is fully paid. But if a house does rise in value, the homeowner is on the hook for the higher property taxes, which quickly can surpass the modest mortgage payment. Not surprisingly, a number of Habitat homeowners each year chafe at the restrictions, deed their houses back to affiliates, and walk away.

Still, for argument's sake, let's say that Habitat supporters—a list that includes taxpayers by means of some $14.7 million in HUD grants in 2004—actually do want a charity that provides America's not-quite-poor and almost-middle-income with deeply subsidized mortgages and a little well-intended condescension. Surely Habitat is at least a cost-effective way to do that, right?

Think again. Representatives at Habitat's international headquarters in Georgia will say only that its houses typically sell for $49 per square foot; many local affiliates will admit freely that construction costs can run tens of thousands of dollars more than the sale price reflects. Appropriately calculated, Habitat's typical per-square-foot construction cost is likely closer to, if not even higher than, that of private-sector, entry-level homebuilders—volunteers and donations notwithstanding.

More to the point: Is Habitat for Humanity's basic model of building and holding notes on houses an effective use of its donors' money? This year, Habitat's international organization and its affiliates worldwide will report revenues of almost a billion dollars, making it one of the largest U.S.-based charities. Habitat declines to release aggregated figures on its expenditures, but a conservative estimate for last year, for example, would be to divide $600 million by the 6,000 houses built here. That produces this staggering—and probably understated—result: Each year, Habitat offices spend or commit some $100,000 *per beneficiary family* in the United States.

What other ostensibly poverty-oriented charity comes anywhere close to that? For that kind of money, scores of thousands of lower-income Americans could be led by counselors through a thorough rehabilitation of their credit profile or even receive outright grants to use as housing down payments with conventional lenders. Far more genuinely poor Americans could be helped to stay in homes they already own; thousands more apartment- or row-house-owners could receive funds and volunteer assistance renovating their existing properties.

In other words, why does Habitat for Humanity persist, at such great expense and limitation, in supporting its own alternative to the extremely efficient and highly accessible private housing and financial markets? It is as if Fuller, back in his '70s-hippie-commune days, acted instead on an urge to help educate people by building his own colossal, tuition-subsidized K-through-college complex in the woods of rural Georgia.

One answer, of course, is that a do-it-yourself homebuilding empire is curiously appealing to donors. Habitat's volunteer carpenters, for instance, also write a large portion of the checks received, and for them, says sociologist Baggett, building houses on the other side of the tracks looks good and feels good. The real draw isn't the eventual homeowner—it's the fleeting intimacy of a 21st-century barn raising in which volunteers can "rub shoulders and swing hammers and have a sense of community," as he puts it. "Feeling good and feeling right—and that's more valuable to a lot of Americans than the work they're actually volunteering to do."

The public face of Habitat for Humanity is one of energetic warm-heartedness with a touch of glitz—earnest staff, busy volunteers, enthusiastic celebrities from Oprah to Jack Kemp. But seen up close, Habitat for Humanity looks more like a wildly expensive means of aiding a misrepresented clientele.

Perhaps, then, change at the top is well timed. With vision and tough choices, Millard Fuller's successor may be able to restore a focus on Americans in the bottom fifth of household incomes, and develop or expand more cost-effective programs for higher-risk clients. The odds for such a transformation are probably slim, however. After all, the chair of the search committee is none other than Jimmy Carter. ♦

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Who Let the Dogs Out?

Congressional Cemetery's four-legged groundskeepers. BY MARK STRICHERZ

WHEN HOLLY BURKHALTER is not working, she often unwinds by taking her dog over to Congressional Cemetery in southeast Washington, D.C., and letting the German shepherd roam around the historic graveyard. Burkhalter is the chief lobbyist for Physicians for Human Rights and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Her job demands long hours and, like many busy Capitol Hill professionals, she is happy to have found a place where her $1,000 purebred can romp off the leash. On a lovely Sunday afternoon recently, the 51-year-old had brought along a copy of the *New York Times* to read and a little red rubber ball for young Fala to play fetch with. "Oh, we just *love* the cemetery," she said, as the dog brushed its chocolate coat against her.

Burkhalter was kneeling on a grassy incline beside some tombstones, about 50 yards away from where the great composer and conductor John Philip Sousa and Civil War photographer Matthew Brady are interred. Like many of the dog-owners there, she understands people might have qualms about dogs cavorting among the dignitaries' headstones. Unlike many of them, Burkhalter, a sweet woman and practicing Roman Catholic, has paid attention to her surroundings and learned the stories of some of the people buried there: "I like the gravestones of the moms best, the ones who died in childbirth. I feel bad for them and their babies."

Burkhalter tossed the red ball across a one-lane road. As if one with the toy, the dog raced behind in pursuit. About 15 yards in front of her, the ball bounced on some grass and then caromed off a three-foot high gray headstone, under which Henry M. and Elizabeth Steinert are buried. "Aww, geez," Burkhalter said, cringing at the sight. Fala showed no remorse at all.

Congressional Cemetery "is not a dog park; it's a cemetery," Burkhalter allows. In theory, she is correct. The 32-acre parcel, located on the edge of Capitol Hill, is the resting place for an estimated 60,000 people. Among the list of notables buried there are J. Edgar Hoover, Elbridge Gerry (of gerrymander fame), several hundred congressmen, and an array of Civil War generals and Revolutionary-era leaders. There are also cenotaphs at the site in honor of John C. Calhoun, Henry Clay, Hale Boggs, and Tip O'Neill. Over Memorial Day weekend, the graveyard was peppered with roughly 1,800 U.S. flags.

In practice, however, the site has gone to the dogs. Christ Church, the Episcopal church that owns the grounds, collects an annual fee from dog owners that it uses for upkeep—a program that's proved very popular. On the weekends especially, 10 to 15 dogs at any one time can typically be found walking with their owners or dashing around the tombstones and mausoleums. When nature calls, the owners don't always clean up after them. "Well, you're supposed to," says 50-year-old Tim Sadler, who then leans his head toward me and away from the four dogs he brought today. "But it's hard to tame the dogs."

Sometimes, though, the people are the ones in need of taming. Natalie Yoder volunteers that some dog-owners deliberately seek out the gravesite of the former number one G-man. "Hoover's buried here. Some people let their dog pee on it," says Yoder, 29, in a voice that makes it unclear as to where her sympathies lie. (Her own Boxer pup, Ollie, is unable to choose sides because she is a female and a four-foot high, black, wrought-

Mark Stricherz, a writer living in Washington, D.C., is working on a book about how secular, educated elites transformed the Democratic party.

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iron fence surrounds Hoover's grave.)

In looking around Congressional Cemetery, it's hard not to commit amateur sociology on the dog-owners. They cruise by in their Range Rovers, Volvo 240 DL's, and Subaru station wagons. On their windows are decals from Oberlin College and bumper stickers that read "Like Father, Like Son. One Term." They wear T-shirts for the musical *Rent*. They seem unimpressed by the great civic and military figures like Clay, Sousa, and Joseph G. Totten who are honored here.

But in fairness to the bobos, while they have allowed the graveyard to go to the dogs, they have prevented it from going to hell. Founded in 1807, Congressional Cemetery was in rotten shape as recently as the early 1980s. Vandals had wreaked havoc with the property, drug dealers sold their wares, and homeless people slept there.

"You looked at all the derelicts at the place, the unkempt trees and branches, and it was clear no one was going there," says Linda Harper, the chairman of the board for the Association for the Preservation of Historic Congressional Cemetery, a group formed by local citizens in the late '70s.

By 1997 the association had succeeded in convincing the National Trust for Historic Preservation to put the cemetery on its list of 11 most endangered historic places. The designation prompted Congress in 1999 to appropriate $1 million to rehabilitate the cemetery.

Today Congressional Cemetery is in far better physical and financial shape. The dog owners have been instrumental in reclaiming the property and paying for its upkeep. About 250 people pay $125 a year plus $40 per canine for the privilege of walking their dog off the leash. Local Boy Scout troops and Marines pitch in with projects, as do the dog owners. Parts of the site are gorgeous. There are rolling hills and slight valleys, crabapple trees and pink carnation petals. In the middle of the graveyard is a small stone-covered chapel for religious services. Even the salmon-colored adjoining buildings for the D.C. jail look good.

At the same time, Congressional Cemetery does not begin to live up to the great democratic and civic standards once taken for granted at such sites. (Think of Lincoln at Gettysburg: "From these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion.") It's not just the presence of the dogs. It's the lack of even cursory information about the renowned Americans buried there. The cemetery has no markers or signs explaining the accomplishments of the many historical figures buried there. No wonder that many of the dog-walkers can name only Hoover among those interred there.

Photos by Lev Nisnevitch

Nor is this likely to improve. The directors of the Congressional Cemetery—representatives of the church, of the office of the architect of the U.S. Capitol, and of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, among others—emphasize the ecological and environmental potential of the site. "We have a string of efforts to get a more diverse constituency and make it part of a green space with parkland and a riverfront view, to make it part of the Anacostia [Waterfront Initiative]," said Patrick Lally, the chief lobbyist for the National Trust and its liaison to the cemetery. D.C. Mayor Anthony "Williams's vision is to have a network of green space that begins at the National Arboretum . . . and the cemetery will be part of it."

Linda Harper is not wedded to the idea of having dogs run around a burial ground. "Does it bring its own set of problems? Absolutely," she said, adding that down the line the organization might "do something different" with the dog-walkers. But Harper does not see the presence of the canines as a major problem; far more damaging to the gravestones, she says, is acid rain.

She and others say the main problem facing Congressional Cemetery is financial, but running the place is relatively cheap. According to Harper, its annual operating budget is about $280,000. Congress, which has bought hundreds of gravesites there over the last two centuries, could easily do more. No one on the Hill, however, has talked seriously about doing such a thing.

In this, Congress is the perfect cultural and spiritual mirror of the people. Not so long ago, our professional classes aspired toward civic greatness and revered their illustrious predecessors. They did so in many ways—one of them was founding institutions like Congressional Cemetery. They did not do so by letting their dogs run around the graves of their heroes. ♦

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Why Did the French and Dutch Vote No?

Because they were asked, for a change.

By Christopher Caldwell

When the Russian army chased Napoleon's troops all the way back to Paris in 1814, the occupiers were not just tolerated but welcomed. They were chic. The empress Josephine herself went riding with the young czar. The locals seemed to delight in subjugation, the more undignified, the better. "We women," wrote Mme. Chateaubriand, "would cry 'Off with our heads!' were we to hear our neighbors do so." The French are funny. They will always stand up against usurpation of their rights and liberties by foreigners—but they do take their time about it.

Last week, their time came. French voters rejected a proposed "constitutional treaty" for the European Union and sent a shock through the continent. Seventy percent of the country turned out—roughly triple the usual French showing for an E.U. election—after the most heated national debate since the Algerian war. They rejected the treaty by a stunning 10-point margin.

In so doing, they closed the book on a half-century in which France had sought to maintain its dwindling world clout by leading the countries of Europe into a new kind of political union, with its capital in Brussels. "Never separate the *grandeur* of France from the building of Europe," president François Mitterrand had said in the early 1990s, towards the end of his 14 years in office. "This is our new dimension." By the turn of the millennium, the influential editor of the *Nouvel Observateur*, Jacques Julliard, could say that "today's French patriots are Europeans." And in 2003, France's foreign minister, Dominique de Villepin, made an international media feast of this new doctrine before it was even fully cooked, telling bemused delegates to the United Nations, that they—and they alone—had the legitimacy to press for democratic change in Iraq.

Having unleashed this gospel on the world, the French have now become the first to declare their apostasy. The consequences were both immediate and far-reaching. The Dutch, who share many of the misgivings about the surrendering of sovereignty that the French do, had a referendum three days later. Their worries had been compounded by two recent episodes of political violence—the assassination of the populist politician Pim Fortuyn in May 2002 and the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by an Islamist radical in November 2004. The Dutch rejected the constitutional treaty by 62 percent to 38, on a 63 percent turnout. That, too, was roughly triple the country's showing at a typical European election.

The only part of the 485-page constitution that anyone will henceforth need to remember—although it is the part that people all over Brussels are now trying to forget—is Article IV, section 447. That passage stipulates that the constitutional treaty is not valid unless all countries of the E.U. ratify it. There is no putting a brave face on what has happened: The E.U.'s attempt to bind itself constitutionally into an ever closer union has, for the foreseeable future, failed.

This is not without consequences for the United States. Some of them are good ones. Just last month, flush with his success in the recent British parliamentary elections, anti-Iraq war member of parliament George Galloway gloated over the coming reckoning for the friends of the American alliance. "Most of the commentary that you'll read nowadays," Galloway told Charlie Rose, "is about when, not if, Mr. Blair departs the political stage early, and I think Iraq is the main reason for that. Aznar in Spain has already gone. I predict, you know, that Berlusconi in Italy will be the next to go. One by one, these people who committed this, at best, grotesque blunder, are paying a political price for it."

But now things look different. German chancellor Gerhard Schröder, the man who opened the European floodgates to anti-Americanism during his 2002 election

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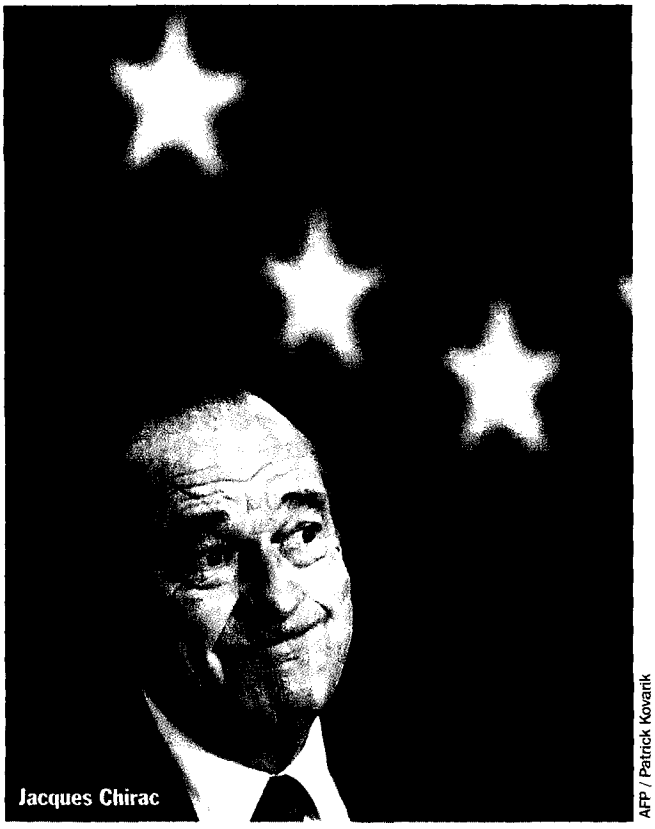
campaign, has just called early elections after his Social Democratic party was routed in its stronghold of North Rhine-Westphalia for the first time in four decades. Few give him any chance of winning a new term next fall. After investing his all in the constitutional "Yes" campaign, Jacques Chirac appears to be facing the end of his political career. It is true that he nominated the antiwar standard-bearer Dominique de Villepin as his new prime minister last week. But the embarrassing price for Chirac was that he also nominate his arch-rival, Nicolas Sarkozy, the most pro-American (and most popular) politician in the country, as minister of state. The Villepin choice may dig Chirac deeper into a hole. Only a third of voters approve of the choice, according to a poll taken last week by Ipsos. Sixty-four percent of respondents said they wanted a thoroughgoing change in the government, and only 20 percent thought Villepin was the man for that job.


Jacques Chirac

AFP / Patrick Kovark

This does not mean that Galloway had it backwards, and that opponents of the Iraq war will now find it impossible to win office in Europe. It does mean, though, that the anti-Americanism that drove certain politicians' approval ratings through the roof in 2002 and 2003 is of very limited staying power.

The constitution in question was actually a hybrid document. It was partly a codification of existing treaties and laws. But it folded in a couple of real transfers of sovereignty from nation-states to the European government that were, indeed, constitutional in nature. It would have given Europe a president and a foreign minister, both to be chosen for two-and-a-half-year terms. It would have wrested the right to legislate for the continent from the 25 constituent nation-states and given it to the "Euro-MPs" who sit in the European Parliament in Strasbourg. Once the French and Dutch referenda failed, it quickly became Brussels consensus that it had been a mistake to call the document a constitution. That's true only in retrospect; had the constitutional thingy, whatever you choose to call it, passed, the ability to *paint* it as a constitution would have been crucial to increasing Brussels' power and prestige. The would-be world statesmen of the next global crisis would no longer risk being derided as "self-styled," or as mere messenger boys for the washed-up politicians who get put out to pasture in Brussels. They would be able to say, "Under the constitutional powers vested in me by the people of the European Union . . ."

The proceedings smacked to most voters of politicians trying to pull a fast one on them. On the site *etienne.chouard.free.fr*, a Marseilles secondary-school teacher with a gift for crystalline prose and a weakness for silly pictographs—particularly :o)—convinced his countrymen almost single-handed that this was the case. (One of the revolutionary developments of the past campaign, largely thanks to Etienne Chouard, has been the rise of blogging in France.) "I haven't read the text and I simply don't have the time—too much work," Chouard wrote late in the campaign. But he warned that the mainstream media were ignoring the main stakes of the constitution. He laid out five of them:

1. A constitution has to be readable to permit a popular vote; this text is unreadable.
2. A constitution doesn't impose a political ideology; this text is partisan.
3. A constitution is revisable; this text is locked in . . .
4. A constitution protects people from tyranny through separation of powers; this one doesn't have real checks and balances and separation of powers.
5. A constitution is not handed down by the powerful; it is established by the people themselves, to protect them from arbitrary power, through an independent constitutional assembly elected for the purpose and disbanded afterwards; this text entrenches European institutions designed 50 years ago by the men in power.

In this light, the answer to the question of why the French and Dutch voted down the European constitution is simple: because they were asked. In the Netherlands,

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the metaphor on everyone's lips was that of a runaway train. The young PvdA (Labor) party chairman Wouter Bos—who was placed in an awkward position when his party voted resoundingly against the treaty that he had crisscrossed the country urging them to vote *for*—said: "People had the feeling that they were sitting on a runaway train. For the first time they had the chance to jump off. They had no idea how fast the train was going, or where it was headed."

Jacques Chirac viewed the "No" vote as a sign of resurgent nationalism, and hoped to exploit it. "In this period," he said last week, "we have to rally to the national interest." Similarly, if more subtly, Jean-Marie Colombani, editor of *Le Monde*, painted the French vote as a reactionary one: an assault on an E.U. that "disrupts habits and forces changes" on largely hidebound societies. But it's not clear that he's correct. In both countries it was the center-right parties (in popular mythology, the forces of complacency) that formed the bulk of the "Yes" vote. In France, roughly three-quarters of the two "conservative" parties—both Jacques Chirac's UMP and former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing's UDF—voted for the treaty. In Holland the market-liberal VVD and the Christian CDA were the constitutional treaty's biggest defenders, backing it by 60 and 77 percent of the vote respectively.

Reuters Photo Archive / Amel Pain

A "Non" voter celebrates, Place de la Bastille, May 29.

This leads to a puzzle: If the bastion of support for the E.U. is the center-right, then how has it happened that for so many years the E.U. has been governed from the center-left? The elections showed both countries' center-left parties—the Socialists in France and Labor in the Netherlands—to be divided right down the middle on the issue. These are alarming data: They imply that there is no "base" constituency for the policies of the E.U. as they're currently constituted.

Holland's Christian Union, led by the political prodigy André Rouvoet, led a campaign against the E.U. that was commonsensical, couched in the language of American (even Reaganite) tax revolutionaries, and optimistic. His was the only bourgeois party of the right to oppose the treaty, voting "No" by 86-14 percent. For Rouvoet the key fact was that the Netherlands pays more per capita into the E.U. than any other country. His party's appeal can be understood from a poll taken for the daily *De Volkskrant* last week. The "No" campaigners had real, concrete issues. Their top two were (1) "The Netherlands pays too much for the E.U.," and (2) "It makes us less in charge in our own country." As for the "Yes" campaign, its top issues were thin air. They were (1) "Transnational politics are best addressed by the E.U.," and (2) "Foster cooperation between member nations." To the barricades, he yawned.

The uncomfortable news is that, except for the Christian Union in Holland, it was hardline parties of the left and right that carried the torch for "democracy." Calls for Chirac to dissolve parliament came from the Trotskyite postman Olivier Besancenot and the revanchist National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen. They have to be viewed more seriously than they were last month. Rightist extremism is a worry. European leaders have lazily taken to using the epithet "anti-European" to split the difference between calling someone a fascist and patting him on the back. Calling Le Pen and the Austrian Jörg Haider "anti-European" lets you exclude them from the councils of state without insulting extremist voters you'll need in the next election. Now that anti-Europeanism has shown itself the majority ideology in Western European referenda, we must hope potential Le Pen voters understand that politicians were merely speaking tactically. Leftist extremism is a worry, too, because of the left's organizing ability. A train strike was called in France to greet Villepin's arrival in power, and Besancenot has promised further "social mobilizations" in coming weeks. The worry is that the French "No" campaign, come the presidential elections of 2007, will resemble the Resistance in, say, 1948: A great coalition defeats a formidable foe, and only the Communists among them are well-enough organized to reap the benefit.

The problem at present is that mainstream politicians, national and European, have no credible lines of communication to their publics. The E.U. has taken on

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so many responsibilities, especially regulatory and economic ones, that the capacity of individual nation-states for full self-government has atrophied. This has spread the E.U.'s so-called "democratic deficit" (the thing that this constitutional plebiscite was meant to fix) to national governments. Consider the Netherlands. There, nearly two-thirds of the voters repudiated the E.U.—but 85 percent of national legislators were firm (often sanctimonious) supporters of the treaty just a few short weeks ago. This gap is the hot political topic in Europe right now. It will be redressed through national elections across the continent over the next couple of years.

Until then, Europe will pass through a rocky period in which every article of *bien-pensant* faith gets renegotiated. On some issues, the new dispensation is already crystal-clear. One is the candidacy of Turkey for admission to the European Union. Turkey has been vying for entry since the early 1960s, and E.U. leaders agreed last winter to open the negotiations that would culminate in full membership in another decade. It won't happen. The huge number of French and Dutch "No" voters who cited Turkey as one of their primary worries about the E.U.—whether because its cheap labor will threaten Europe's jobs or because its Muslim identity threatens Europe's cultural coherence—have turned Turkey into a third rail of European politics.

AP / Peter Dejong

Anti-E.U. cows in the Netherlands

The outcome is made even more certain by the impending national elections in Germany. Bavarian prime minister Edmund Stoiber, the conservative candidate for chancellor in 2002, urged an end to Turkish accession talks. "The European Union is not capable of accommodating itself to Turkey," he said, "nor is Turkey capable of accommodating itself to the European Union." Ingo Friedrich, one of Stoiber's Christian Democratic allies, went even further last week, recommending an "accession moratorium" not just for Turkey but also for Bulgaria and Romania, whose accession remains only to be formalized. Schröder said on Friday that he was against such reversals. But if he sticks with that position he will forfeit any chance of reelection. Turkish businessmen can read the signals. The Monday after Schröder's Social Democrats were defeated in Germany's populous state of North Rhine-Westphalia, Turkey's stock market lost 5 percent of its value.

There are a dozen more referenda to come before next spring, and polls show the "Yes" side losing most of them. In fact, Europeans whose countries have *already* ratified the treaty feel like they've been had, and want to revisit it. A majority of Germans—who are not permitted binding referenda for reasons having to do with their 20th-century history—told pollsters at Infratest-Dimap last week that they would like to see the constitutional treaty renegotiated, even though their own legislators ratified it just last month.

Because of Article IV section 447, future referenda are totally pointless. Yet when Tony Blair sensibly suggested that he cancel his own country's referendum, the European Commission president José Manuel Durão Barroso warned against "unilateral actions." Indeed, other European politicians are suggesting that Europe simply proceed to enact their favorite parts of the constitutional treaty by any means necessary. Important reforms—the European Defense Agency (which is up and running already anyway), the two-and-a-half-year presidency, the European Ministry of Foreign Affairs—can simply be declared not constitutional matters after all, and can be dealt with in the traditional manner by the Brussels bureaucracy. Luxembourg's prime minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, spent much of the spring urging that any country that rejected the constitution submit it to a "re-vote."

The Spanish prime minister José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero said after the French defeat, "We must take note of the discontent expressed in this vote, and redouble our efforts to explain that this constitution enshrines the rights and freedoms of Europeans as our social model." In general, there's a Catch-22 here. Europe's political leaders are responding to the referendum debacle with the same lack of accountability for which they've just been censured. ♦

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My E.U. Vacation

What I learned reading the European constitution on a French beach in the Caribbean

By P.J. O'Rourke

Guadeloupe

The French referendum on the E.U. constitution was a story that demanded to be viewed and understood from a thoroughly European perspective, so I went on vacation. Guadeloupe, in the Caribbean, is a full-fledged *département* of France. Here the European Union could be contemplated as the socio-politico-economic masterwork of a civilization, an edifice of human hope. And never mind that previous attempts to unify Europe by Hitler, Napoleon, and Attila the Hun didn't work out, it had been a cold, rainy spring in New England.

At passport control there were two lines. One official sat complacently in a booth doing nothing until all the E.U. citizens had been processed at another booth by a second official who, in turn, sat complacently doing nothing until the first official had finished. When, at last, the first official examined a non-E.U. passport he walked across the aisle to the second official's booth, borrowed the visa stamp, walked back, stamped the passport, and returned the stamp to his colleague. He did the same thing for each subsequent passport. At Customs, on the other hand, there were no officials.

All around the island billboards read "OUI" or "NON." They were equal in number and identical in color and typography. The fairness doctrine debates of America must have hit home in the E.U. Obviously rigorous, uniform rules on campaign media had been instituted. I mentally composed several indignant paragraphs about how John McCain will be advocating this soon in the United States before I noticed the billboards were advertising a cell phone company. Say "NON" to service charges, "OUI" to free minutes.

Real pro and con referendum posters had to be looked for. They were on special hoardings outside of schools and municipal offices where pasting up of expressions of free speech was officially sanctioned. Campaign rhetoric had a certain subtle, European sophistication. At least I guess so. The slogan on one "Oui" poster was "*L'Europe—a besoin de notre*." According to the dictionary I bought for high school French, this translates as "The Europe—to, at, in, on, by or for need, want or necessity of ours."

Guadeloupe is a volcanic island of soaring, majestic beauty upon which the French have turned their backs to build everything as close as possible to the damp-spritzed, wind-butted beaches with sand the color of Buick fake wood trim and a profusion of foot-piercing volcanic rocks. Also, what's French for "Every litter bit hurts"? Some of the older buildings have a limbo-party-at-the-Phi-Delt-House charm. They will be torn down as soon as the French economy finally revives and more reinforced concrete is poured in the European Bauhaus style. Form follows function. The function is to grow tropical mold.

That said, Guadeloupe's main city, Pointe-à-Pitre, is nice enough, with no glaring slums, no glaring locals, and only the Caribbean minimum of starving stray dogs. Plenty of new Citroens, Peugeots, and Renaults grace the traffic jams although Guadeloupe's per capita GDP is only $8,000. The people are sleek and fashionably dressed. The streets are well-swept by the standards of the tropics and well-paved by the standards of New York. Some gang graffiti are visible but only in easily reached places where paint can be sprayed without ruining school clothes. Guadeloupe seems like a swell place to be poor—if poor is what you like to be.

Perhaps the benign and comfortable atmosphere is a result of French culture and values, such as those the French imparted to Haiti. More likely it's the result of the large subsidies evident in the excellent road system that extends to every place on the island including places no one goes. And Guadeloupe has more impressive government buildings than an overseas *département* with a population of 450,000 could need, enough for a minor European country (which France, now that it's rejected the E.U. constitution, has arguably become).

As beach reading that constitution fulfills one criterion—it's 485 pages long. And Danielle Steel could not

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worsen the prose style: "The institutions of the Union shall apply the principle of subsidiarity as laid down in the Protocol on the application of the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality." Every aspect of European life is considered in exquisite detail, vid. Annex I, pages 403 and 404, clarifying agricultural trade regulations for "edible meat offal" and "lard and other rendered pig fat."

I slathered myself in Bain de Soleil and spread my towel between pumice and discarded Gauloises packs. Timing 10 pages of attentive reading, I calculated that it would take 17 hours and three minutes to peruse the full document, by which time I should be quite tan.

According to the constitution, the E.U. is (or was) to have five branches of government: the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, and the Court of Justice of the European Union; plus two advisory bodies: the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee; and four additional independent institutions: the European Central Bank, the European Investment Bank, the Court of Auditors, and the European Ombudsman. Here we have a system of bounced checks and balances.

Part II of the constitution, "The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Union," gives us an idea of what "rights" are supposed to mean in Europe: "Everyone has the right to life." This, on a continent where there's more respect for Dick Cheney than for a fetus. The Charter prohibits "making the human body and its parts as such a source of financial gain." Botox injections will be covered by National Health. There is a "right" to "an annual period of paid leave." (I was having mine.) And a declaration that "The use of property may be regulated by law insofar as is necessary for the general interest." Lenin couldn't have put it better. What there was in this constitution that a subtle, sophisticated European could object to eluded me, as did reading the rest of it.

I was getting bored. I could go hiking in the mountains, except it was 95 degrees. I could take a refreshing dip, except the ocean was 95 degrees. Guadeloupe's painters and artisans are almost bad enough to get into the Venice Biennale. There was nothing in the stores but European stuff at European prices, and, anyway, the stores were, in European fashion, closed most of the time. I began to get American thoughts about jet skis, water park slides, and vast air-conditioned malls. Guadeloupe is lovely. However, there isn't much to do but eat. Every third building seems to be a restaurant. I chose one of the most prepossessing establishments. The Big Mac was delicious.

For some reason (and judging by the E.U. constitution, it was an elaborate one) the referendum in Guadeloupe was held a day before the referendum in mainland France. I went to a polling place at a reinforced concrete school where "*Joyeux Noël*" decorations still hung in the corridor, and interviewed . . . somebody. She seemed to be in charge of something. I said, "*Parlez-vous* English?"

She said, "*Non*."

Actually, I claim that there's a tremendous journalistic advantage to covering politics when you can't speak the language. You aren't misled into reporting what people say; you're forced to report the inexorable truth of what people do.

The people of Guadeloupe weren't doing much. They certainly weren't voting. I counted 10 voters in the *Joyeux Noël* school and none at the next two polling places I visited. The streets of Pointe-à-Pitre were crowded. The stores were open for a change, but the crowds seemed to be standing around more than shopping. Of course maybe they were standing in line. Guadeloupe provides a very European level of service.

The people of Guadeloupe weren't doing much. They certainly weren't voting. I counted 10 voters in the Joyeux Noël school.

The next day, back in Europe itself, France rejected the E.U. constitution because (CNN International informed me) the French were worried about competition from Eastern Europeans for French jobs. According to French unemployment figures, the French don't have jobs. In Guadeloupe they're more self-confident about doing nothing. The *département* voted "Oui" in the referendum, albeit with a do-nothing 22 percent turnout.

At the airport, leaving Guadeloupe, I talked to a mainland Frenchman, Antoine. We were standing in line. A reggae band was on our flight. They had drums. Detailed consideration of the weight and measurements of the drum set had brought seat selection and baggage checking to a halt. Antoine went to buy a bottle of rum and came back 20 minutes later. "This island!" he said. "The airport is full of people and every duty-free shop is closed." Our line hadn't budged. "I have a business friend who lives here," Antoine said. "He was in a line like this at the post office in Pointe-à-Pitre. No one advanced in the line for more than an hour. At last he went to the front of the line and said to the postal clerk, 'Nobody is moving here!' She said, 'Oh, no?' and put up a sign that said 'Out to lunch,' and left."

The French are well advised to worry about competition. But not from the Czechs and Poles. Some citizens of their own country are better at being European than they are. ♦

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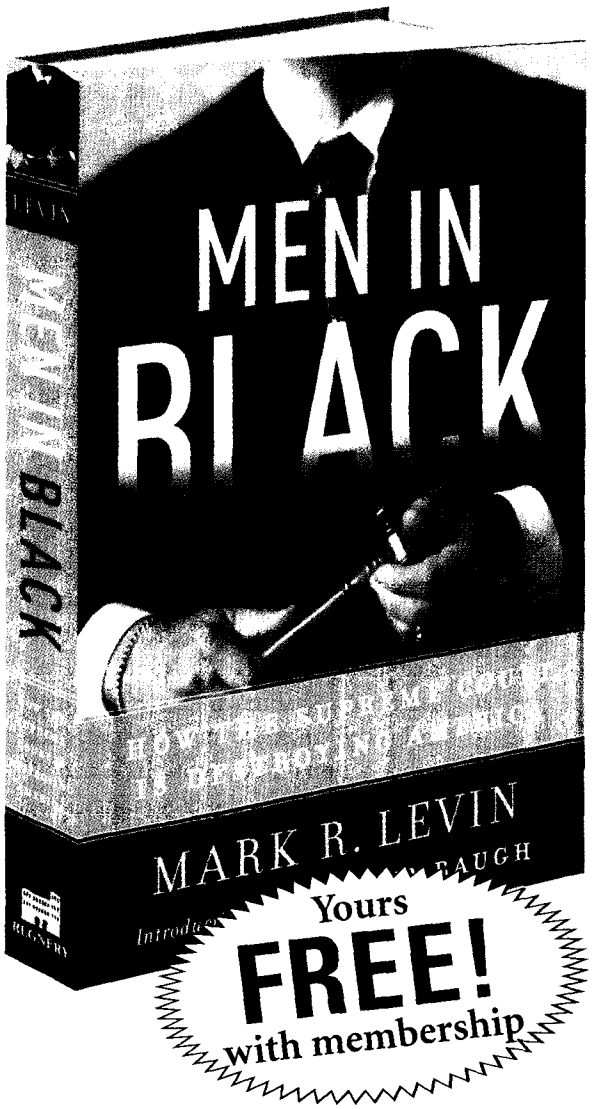

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Of Genes and Genomes

Where is the science of life taking us?

By CHRISTINE ROSEN

Bettmann / CORBIS

or Mendel, father of modern genetics

One of the conceits of our times is that we live in such a complicated world that we require expert guidance to complete even the simplest of tasks. This sensibility is perhaps best exemplified by the small industry of guidebooks and how-to manuals that ironically flatter our incompetence by offering us the Complete Idiot's Guide to This, or the Dummies' Guide to That. The British publisher Overlook has launched a slightly different kind of series, called the "Intelligent Person's Guides," and the most recent addition to the series is *An Intelligent Person's Guide to Genetics* by Adrian Woolfson, who teaches medicine at Clare College Cambridge, and is a contributor to the *London Review of Books*.

Dummies and Idiots are not the intended audience for Woolfson's elegant summary, with its impressive bibliography and often sophisticated discussions of genetic science. Woolfson's book tackles the history and current state of genetic science, in the process offering definitions and explanations of the basic features of the science, descriptions of important discoveries, and discussion of the attendant forces that influence and interact with DNA. He describes succinctly the much-publicized race between the privately funded scientist J. Craig Venter and researchers at the National Institutes of Health to sequence the human genome, avoiding both the breathlessness and hyperbole that so often infect descriptions of the project.

An Intelligent Person's Guide to Genetics
by Adrian Woolfson
Overlook, 224 pp., $21.95

Woolfson's achievement is his ability to explain complicated scientific processes in lucid prose, marshaling metaphors that clarify rather than obscure the material. Of the nucleosome, for example, the group of proteins that packages DNA, Woolfson writes, "It functions much like the chaperones who used to accompany Victorian ladies on their excursions, determining whether the DNA is allowed to have access to visiting proteins or not." To read someone of clinical experience and scientific expertise who is also such a deft writer is a rare treat.

Christine Rosen is a fellow at the Ethics and Public Policy Center and the author of Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement.

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Bettmann / CORBIS

Thomas Hunt Morgan, ca. 1930

Despite his enthusiasm for Victorian cultural examples such as P.T. Barnum's Tom Thumb and the illusionist John Henry Pepper, Woolfson unfortunately offers little grounding in the culture of geneticists, past and present. Thomas Hunt Morgan, the American scientist who won the Nobel Prize in 1933 for his experiments on the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster*, was one of the few geneticists to distance himself from eugenics, the movement that served as a precursor to genetics in the early 20th century. Many other geneticists, such as H.S. Jennings, were members of eugenics organizations until the 1920s. In other words, geneticists pursued their science not merely for the sake of science; they pursued it because it was a means to an end—improving the human race—even when that end required coercive means such as compulsory sterilization. It is difficult to consider thorough a guide to genetics that includes nary a mention of genetics's wicked stepsister, eugenics.

The best sections of Woolfson's narrative are his descriptions of important moments of scientific discovery in the field of genetics, which often include quirky details, like the story of scientists in the 1950s who, in the course of studying DNA in *E. coli* bacteria, "whirred in a kitchen blender" the cultures they'd created. Information about contemporary research initiatives, such as the Model Cell Consortium, which has embarked on a project far more ambitious than the Human Genome Project but has received much less attention, are also given their due. The Consortium is an effort to "model the logic and behavior of 'intelligent' cellular systems" using the *E. coli* bacteria.

From this effort to describe and replicate the structure of simple bacteria, Woolfson writes, will flow attempts to mimic more complex human cells, and to model their development—paving the way for what he calls a new, "bottom-up" approach to genetics, or, as one of his chapters is titled, "Making Creatures from Scratch." Woolfson discusses dispassionately the creation of animal chimeras (two dissimilar animals bred to create a new creature) and the revival of lost species like the dodo. He suggests that, eventually, "it might be possible to re-create the elusive ancestor of all human life on Earth, a hypothetical organism known as LUCA, or the 'least universal common ancestor'" since "the remnants of LUCA should be scattered across the genomes of all living things." We could, he claims, bring LUCA "back to life."

About these Lazarus-like future possibilities Woolfson is wildly enthusiastic. Using man-made genomes, Woolfson speculates, "the circuitry of existing species can be mixed and matched to produce completely new biological structures and behaviors." We are on "the cusp of a new Enlightenment," he argues, "defined by the accumulated genetic knowledge that enables us to entertain the possibility of modifying our own nature and creating artificial life."

Of the odder creatures we might have the power to create—the flamingosceros or the kangapelican, for example—Woolfson reassures, "A great many of these potential creatures will be logically flawed and unrealizable." But why should we assume that we will keep Dr. Moreau confined to his island? Woolfson, who earlier in his book notes the great success of P.T. Barnum, should not be so cavalier about the public's appetite for the biologically bizarre. A modern Barnum might televise, for a far larger audience of viewers than Barnum himself ever commanded, the creation and activities of such chimeras. More worrisome, the logical conclusion of such experiments would be the creation of synthetic human life—Frankensteins, if you're a pessimist, or new Adams, if you're an optimist.

This future of "synthetic genomics," which would finally allow man to move from merely controlling nature (through the imposition of environmental controls such as plant breeding, or genetic controls such as selecting embryos with certain traits) to becoming nature's creator, requires few constraints in Woolfson's view. This new world need not maintain the boundary between human and animal: "Once the genes and programs that make us human have been identified," Woolfson writes, "we might choose to transfer them into other species in order to humanize them."

Spiritual constraints would not factor in, either, since Woolfson's is an entirely secular worldview. He is, in fact, surprisingly unreflective about this dramatic shift, from Nature to Man, of the power to create new forms of life. "For over three billion years," he writes matter-of-factly, "life has made do with 20, and in a very small number of cases, 21 different amino acids; but in the future such constraints will not be necessary." He seems unwilling to apply Dollo's law —"once a species loses a particular characteristic, the character elimination tends to be irreversible," which he

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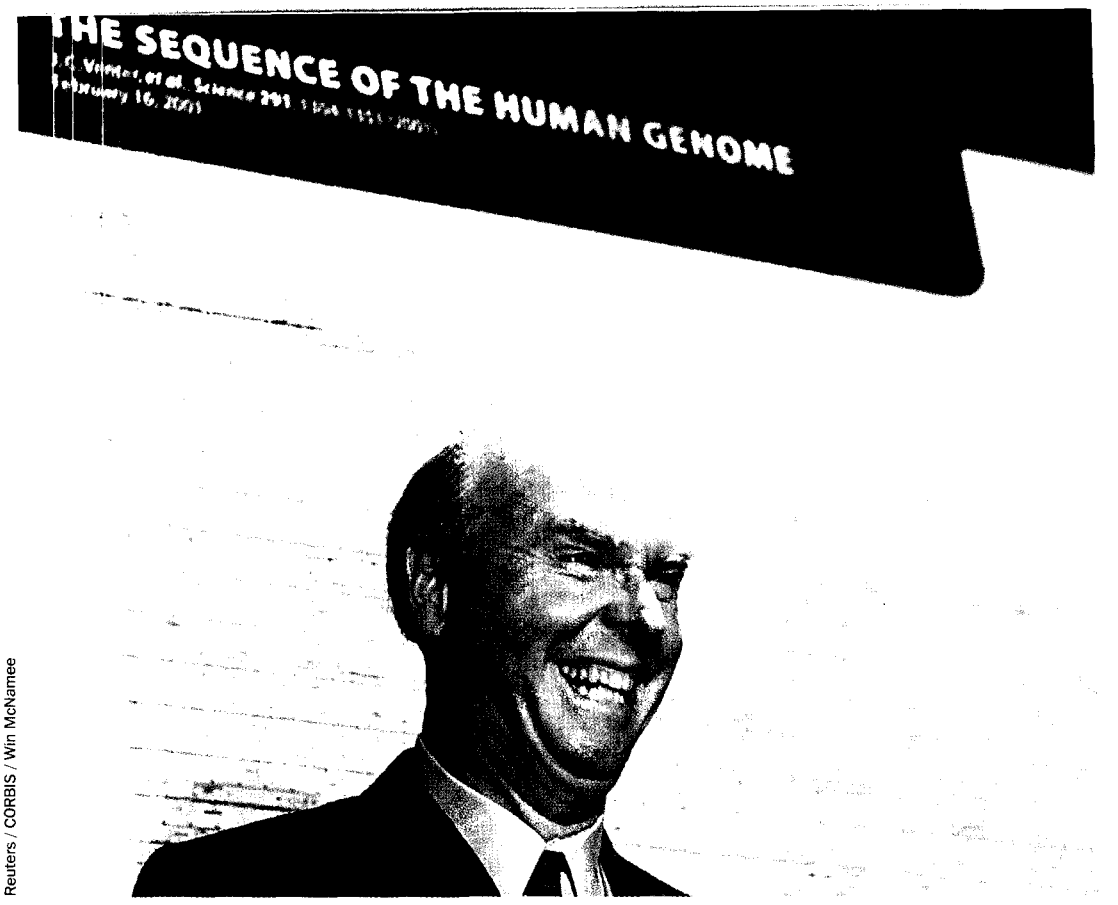

Reuters / CORBIS / Win McNamee

J. Craig Venter, 2001

cites to describe evolution to the actions of humans creating new species.

This lack of concern for the long-term consequences of creating synthetic life stems from Woolfson's sense that these things are inevitable. In the preface to his book, he warns us that his work "should not be read as advocating a particular course of action. My view is slightly different: the creation of synthetic life is an inevitability." This, of course, is advocating a particular course of action—letting science continue on, uninterrupted and unburdened by ethical limits—until such nonintervention yields a world where man is no longer merely capable of controlling Nature, but of creating it from whole cloth. But foregone conclusions can yield their own kind of trouble, and unalloyed enthusiasm is its own worldview. It is here where the clinician would have done better to yield to history and experience. Woolfson never entertains any possibility but the inevitability of these transformations.

"In the long term," he writes, "the question of whether or not we should profoundly modify our nature, and that of other creatures, is, like Turing's question, absurd. . . . Synthetic life is inevitable because we are intrinsically curious, because we have utopian desires: these are inalienably human characteristics." Yes, men have always had utopian desires; and history, mythology, and religion are filled with warnings to man about indulging in utopian schemes. But the more malignant of them (such as those of a Hitler or a Stalin, for example) were never inevitable once they faced concerted opposition.

Woolfson's optimism about our synthetic future stems, in part, from his particular understanding of the human person. He returns over and over again to the metaphor of the machine: "It seems inevitable that we will have to resign ourselves to the unpalatable fact that we are nothing more than machines," he writes. "That this troubles us is itself a construction of our brains; one day such irrational tendencies might be removed by adjusting the relevant brain circuitry."

He adds, "It may be that one of the things that makes us different from other primates is our possession of genes that make us believe in concepts like the soul." Or, as Tom Wolfe put it more bluntly in an essay on neuroscience a decade ago: Sorry, but your soul just died. Woolfson is not alone in this effort to recast human beings as soulless biological machinery. Neuroscientists are exploring the brains of Buddhist monks and atheists, seeking clues to the biological basis for faith. "All our characteristics," writes Woolfson, "including consciousness, are generated by the agency of genetic microcomputers inside our cells."

But if man is a machine, he will, in this new world of synthetically constructed beings and carefully mapped brains, be one with a different kind of soul; he might also be one with different passions and pursuits. "What is it that makes us human?" Woolfson asks, towards the end of his book. His answer is a biological form of navel-gazing: "The emergence of all human characteristics—from cellular structure to consciousness and the capacity for extended culture—has a rational basis in the hardware and software modifications to our genomes," he concludes. This is a bit deflating, like asking to speak to a philosopher and instead finding yourself lectured by a computer salesman. And those little genetic differences that separate us from other animals have great consequences: They are the impulses that lead us to name our offspring rather than devour them, for example.

Woolfson might be correct that we will appear as strange and gullible to future generations as the Victorians, who believed in fairies, do to us. But he would have done well to consider an observation made by Jorge Luis Borges, whose *Book of Imaginary Beings* he cites. "The future is inevitable and precise, but it may not occur," Borges wrote in *Other Inquisitions*. "God lurks in the gaps." So, too, might resistance to the more extreme forms of human control and alteration of the natural world, and to attempts to reconfigure human nature itself. ♦

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The Cliché Expert

He's never met a hackneyed phrase he didn't use—twice. BY RANDY BOYAGODA

Getty Images / Alex Wong

Thomas Friedman

Thesis: "Clearly, it is now possible for more people than ever to collaborate and compete in real time with more other people on more different kinds of work from more different corners of the planet and on a more equal footing than at any previous time in the history of the world—using computers, email, networks, teleconferencing, and dynamic new software." Source: A social studies paper from a middling high school student, or a scintillating study from the *New York Times*'s most prominent columnist?

In its sloppy jalopy cadence and stunning banality, this sentence suggests a tenth-grader's efforts. But to Thomas Friedman's embarrassment, this statement fuels his car-wreck of a new book, *The World Is Flat*. Subtitled, with criminal deceit, "A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century," this nearly 500-page tome is a testament to our age along the lines of London's Millennium Dome—a monstrosity of poor design, cloudy thinking, and rank hubris.

The World Is Flat
A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century
by Thomas L. Friedman
Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 488 pp., $26

When Friedman visited the headquarters of a software company in Bangalore, he was casually informed that "the playing field is being leveled" between America and Third World giants like India and China, thanks to the rise of global telecommunications networks. Boardroom chitchat led to this horrifically outdated book: "What Nandan is saying, I thought, is that the playing field is being flattened. . . . Flattened? Flattened? My God, he's telling me the world is flat!"

As happens so many more painful times afterward, Friedman here offers us a play-by-play of his mind at work, presuming that we will be thrilled by detailed descriptions of this hamster spanning the globe while spinning in its wheel. Moreover, Friedman bungles the metaphor that spills across the rest of his pages: A level playing field is simply not analogous to a flat world. Even a facile understanding of either term makes clear the clumsiness of this pairing, not to mention the baffling historical associations and logical reversals that Friedman summons in subsequently declaring that the world is flat. But clarity of thought and style are not this book's strong points; superego and literary licentiousness carry the day.

The Olympic height of Friedman's egotism is nowhere more apparent than in the book's foreign policy section, where he tries to make sense of Islamic fundamentalism's roots and its rise through the reach and grasp of modern technology. After Bernard Lewis's authoritative writings and Buruma and Margalit's recent effort, *Occidentalism*, Friedman's commentary on the cultural humiliation and totalitarian philosophy that drive radical Islam comes off as obvious, if not derivative. The self-congratulation, however, is exclusively his, and is on spectacular display in his discussion of Osama bin Laden's reference to Spain in a 2004 message: "Somehow, bin Laden heard or read about this first Arab Human Development Report [released in 2002] from his cave. For all I know, he may have read my own column about it, which was the first to highlight the report and stressed the comparison with Spain."

Leaving aside Friedman's ignorance of history—bin Laden was primarily and bitterly referring to *La Reconquista* when he called Spain "the lost Andalusia" in the message under discussion—the direct geopolitical influence he claims for himself, as evidence of worldwide information spread, is simply outrageous.

More egregious than the author's self-circumnavigation of the globe is his apocalyptic devastation of the English language. Friedman has a remarkable penchant for thinking in clichés: "this definitely wasn't Kansas," "What goes around, comes around," "What

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will they think of next?" and "this really is rocket science." He also seems congenitally incapable of devising a sound metaphor: Friedman declares that Indians can now "plug in and play with the flat world" while Americans "have to dig into ourselves" and tend to the "secrets of our sauce" to "claim [our] slice of the bigger but more complex pie" that is produced when "all the flatteners start to get turbo-charged by all the steroids."

Beyond his vapid clichés and malformed metaphors, Friedman breeds the book's impaired literary conceit: Flat begets flatten, flattened, flattening, flattener, China flattener, coefficient of flatness, Age of Flat, Age of Flatism, compassionate flatism, unflat, various unflatteners, and the Mother of all unflatteners. The only flat word Friedman ignores is the one that characterizes his windy prose.

Leaving aside the malodorous lettering, this is, at base, a lazy effort. Nothing that Friedman reports about the exotic routes of knowledge, capital, labor, and commodities in the Information Age will seem fresh to anyone even peripherally involved with computers and telephones. Friedman is basically right in one respect: Contemporary technology exerts a determinative effect on economic, cultural, and political landscapes the world over. Welcome would be a thoughtful brief that explores and evaluates the responses that America needs to make to maintain its global preeminence while charitably and strategically sharing its know-how. Purporting to offer as much, *The World Is Flat* instead bulges with confusing theoretical structures and belches with blatant contradictions.

As just one example of what passes for argument, he claims that after the (self-devised) decagonal convergence of historical events that led to the onset of (self-styled) "Globalization 3.0," 50 percent of humanity lives in a flat world while 50 percent lives in its unflat counterpart. In the next paragraph, he declares: "Many people live in the twilight zone between the two." After thus establishing his math skills, Friedman continues his assault on logic, patience, and intelligence.

Outside its literary plop, ungainly restatements, autobiographical ejaculations, and unclever lists of products, peoples, and corporations, much of the remaining contents aren't even written by Friedman. Pages are padded with tracts of email correspondence, extended quotations from familiar newspaper articles, and self-affirming interview transcripts with everyone from Bill Gates to friends in Minnesota. When a critical history of the early 21st century is written, *The World Is Flat* may indeed be its touchstone. In terms of substance, style, and significance, the only competitor will be Donald Trump's hair. ♦

Americans at Prayer

How a 17th-century German invented the way we worship. BY DANIEL SULLIVAN

Looking around them, Americans see a relentlessly individualistic brand of Christianity. Members of informal Protestant sects in growing exurbs shop for their megachurch of choice to listen to preachers often certified by mail. And many Christians belonging to mainstream churches adopt the doctrines they agree with and ignore the rest. And yet, if one asks Americans about the history of American religion, they will probably point to the Puritans and the Pilgrims or other churches strict in their doctrine and intolerant of deviance. Some may think of Jonathan Edwards, the preacher of "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God." In short, Americans seem to think that their current freemarket approach to religion arose contrary to a tradition of rigorous orthodoxy.

The sketch above is a caricature, of course. But it reveals a deep misconception that does, in fact, seem to lie at the heart of the way Americans understand their religion. This is the assumption that American individualism radicalized American religion sometime after the country had been established. But, in truth, a rather different development occurred: American Protestantism, in its radical individualism, indelibly molded our culture even as it became secular. At the beginning of the forgotten history that prompts this interpretation is an obscure figure who died 300 years ago this year. His name was Philip Jakob Spener (1635-1705).

Spener was an earnest and devout Lutheran, beginning his career as a minister in Frankfurt in 1666. Born near the end of the Thirty Years' war, and after a century of intermittent religious strife, Spener lived in an age weary of conflict but still yearning for transcendence. Although all Europeans were required to belong to one of the three denominations on the Continent (Roman Catholicism, Lutheranism, and Calvinism), Spener detected that many lacked the genuine inner faith he considered essential to true Christianity. Although a dutiful adherent of orthodox Lutheran theology, Spener valued it primarily insofar as it furthered the practice of piety among Christians. He declared, in his controversial tractate *Pia Desideria*, that intellectual approaches to faith from a distant clergy left the laity indifferent to religion—or, worse, Christians in name only. An account of the inadequacies of the Lutheran church in his day, *Pia Desideria* offered six proposals to renew the internal faith of believers, to bring about in them spiritual rebirth. For Spener, a mystical experience of faith, rather

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than the theological knowledge of it, sowed the seed of true Christianity.

Thus, at the center of all Spener's proposals was a conception of Christianity that still prevails in much of America today: a religion, essentially, of the heart. "Our whole Christian religion consists of the inner man or the new man, whose soul is faith and whose expressions are the fruits of life," he declared. He then defined that inner man: "We lay the right foundation in the heart," and his proposals made changing the heart of the believer so that he might live according to the Gospel the foremost function of the church and its priesthood. He recommended that clergy be educated to preach the Bible effectively to the laity, and that the laity take a role in the ministry of the church. His most famous recommendation was to institute *collegia pietatis*, groups of the devout that came together to read and discuss the Bible. In other words, Bible study. Spener pushed Luther's Reformation further than did Luther himself, insisting on the personal, emotional experience that the believer has of the Holy Spirit, especially through the Gospel: "We must let it penetrate to our heart," he wrote, "so that we may hear the Holy Spirit speak there, that is, with vibrant emotion and comfort feel the sealing of the Spirit."

So what do the thoughts of a German Lutheran in the 17th century have to do with American religion? It is a circuitous, but vital, connection. Well before Spener published *Pia Desideria* in 1675, he was holding *collegia pietatis* in his own home and gathering followers, who eventually became known as Pietists. Europe was teeming with Christian sects preaching a mystical spiritualism. Spener provided a basic intellectual framework for this subjective spiritualism, grounding it in a heartfelt experience of the Word and total fidelity to Scripture. With the approval of the sympathetic Prince Frederick III (later King Frederick I of Prussia), Spener staffed the newly-founded University of Halle in Saxony with Pietist theologians.

Under the direction of Spener's student and collaborator, August Hermann Franke, Halle became the cradle of an increasingly international Pietist movement, one that trained missionaries and ministers and then dispatched them all over the world, including America. One of Franke's early students, and Spener's godson, was the eccentric (and wonderfully named) Count Nicholas Ludwig von Zinzendorf, a believer in what he called "heart religion." When a group of Pietistic Moravian exiles sought refuge on the Count's estate, Zinzendorf soon became the leader of the community, which called itself the Moravian Brethren. Moravian Brethren became a major missionary force, emigrating to Africa, Russia, Holland, England, and America.

While on a ship to Georgia in 1736, they began in a young John Wesley his own spiritual renewal. Two years later, Wesley underwent his definitive conversion experience and went to study at Halle. When he came back, he initiated his Methodist movement in England, and many of his missionaries ended up in America, where Methodism today ranks as the second largest Protestant denomination.

Spener himself was a quiet, irenic Lutheran minister, but the ideas he unleashed soon led many well outside the orthodox Lutheran fold. His emphasis on a priesthood of all believers (something Luther had taught), and his assertion of the essential value of the subjective experience of the Spirit, led many to dismiss theology and the church hierarchy altogether. He fanned the embers of the Reformation of the 16th century and set new fires of his own, which soon enflamed radical pietists all over Germany. Persecuted by the various German governments, many of these priests, too, ended up in America, settling in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and elsewhere. Pietism flowed through several channels to American shores, carrying Spener's fundamental ideas through mainstream Protestant churches and more radical Pietistic movements.

In a sense, American Christianity is constantly experiencing the Reformation. From the Puritans and the Dutch Reformed to the Pietists and the Methodists, the most individualistic and radical sects of Protestantism all came to America, and continued to preach the ideas that had brought them there. Indeed, as many sects have emerged in America, within and without the mainstream denominations, as came here fully formed. The Pietist presence is just one part of this constant proliferation, but it is a part worth remembering, for its essential ideas run through much of American Protestantism. Jonathan Edwards, the great preacher of the Great Awakening, borrowed much from the Pietists and

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Methodists, whom he knew and whose writing he read. Even Catholics in America often show Pietistic leanings, insisting on the validity of their own emotional experience and interpretation of faith over instruction from the Vatican.

Spener articulated the central ideas that shape not only American religion, but the American personality. For Spener and the generation of evangelists he inspired, three principal concerns seemed to crowd out most others. The first was that the people of the church—the laity—should have a voice with the appointed caretakers—the priests—in its direction. The second, which Spener initiated and Franke furthered, was the importance of the emotional experience of the faith—in particular, of a conversion as the pivotal experience of a Christian's life. Finally, the practice of Christianity superseded knowledge of its dogma. These seem typical of American attitudes: a resistance to a hierarchy that claims moral authority, a sentimental religiosity that tests convictions primarily by personal experience, and an emphasis on living a Christian (or perhaps merely virtuous) life according to how one feels rather than what one thinks.

American Christianity is famously inventive and free-wheeling. And while it might seem self-evident to do so, commentators seldom explain the state of American religion as a product of religious history. Some may explain it as a consequence of a country that values free choice, or as the fruit of competition among religious denominations. But America's religious history leads quite naturally to its religious present. The populist, sentimental, and individualistic character of American religion is a continuation on this continent of the protest movement that began nearly 500 years ago in Europe. Any church on this soil, especially any church established on pietistic premises, faces the essential standard of faith described by Philip Jakob Spener: "We must let it penetrate to our heart, so that we may hear the Holy Spirit speak there; that is, with vibrant emotion and comfort feel the sealing of the Spirit." ♦

'Revelations'

The vision of Diane Arbus, the conceit of Jean-Michel Basquiat. BY THOMAS M. DISCH

In spring the world fills up with exhibitionists. All the flowers come up with colors they think bees will have to notice, and young people appear in class plays and dance recitals and get strange haircuts, all by way of saying, "Look at me! Look at me!" (Or, in this multicultural age, "*Mira, Mamma! Mira!*")

Dutifully, we attend their exhibitions and have a look at what the children have been up to. But there are so many flowers, so many needful, noisy children, that even the most obliging attention-giver has to pick and choose. A competition ensues among exhibitors; awards are awarded, and then disputed; hierarchies evolve; and losers form their own *Salons des Refusées*, which soon gel into new establishments.

The ironies of this process of attention-getting and -giving were the constant theme of the photographer Diane Arbus, who, 34 years after her suicide at the age of 48, has been given a retrospective at the Metropolitan Museum (then on tour to Essen, London, Barcelona, and Minneapolis). "Diane Arbus Revelations," as the show is called, is a crowd-pleaser, and I was happy to have been part of the crowd being pleased. Time and again Arbus astonished me, as per Louis XIV's command, and she did it with pictures that have become as familiar as old family photos, pictures that made their first impact in the seventies but have gained new zing in the interval. Surely the mark of a good photographer, as of a good painter, is to create *coups d'oeil*, images that are taken in at a glance and can't be forgotten, images that seem to be axioms in some non-Euclidean geometry that explains the whole world.

Like haiku, good photos show what oft was thought but ne'er so well compressed. The photo that serves as a frontispiece to the exhibition catalogue, "Clouds on screen at a drive-in, N.J. 1960," is a fine example. Who has not gasped or giggled at the sight of the image on a drive-in screen contesting for our attention with the sky behind it? In Arbus's black-and-white picture, the backgrounding sky is pitch-black, the foreground cars visible only as glints of metal, and the image on the screen is a VistaVision cloudscape. Simple, ironic, sublime.

And, it should be noted, in no way one of her signature images, which are of circus freaks, crying babies, masqueraders, pathetic teenagers, sagging grande dames, big-haired suburban housewives, nudists, religious fanatics, and right-wing weirdos. What all these typical Arbusites have in common is a fervent desire to be noticed, a desire so pressing it has vanquished all shyness and turned even the drabbest and least prepossessing of them into exhibitionists, at least for their moment before Arbus's camera. The effect is disconcerting, in varying degrees, but it never ceases to have the good vibrations of that New Jersey drive-in, as though each raddled face and crazy costume were an exhibit in a textbook on the psychopathology of everyday life. Arbus's discoveries are not clues in some criminal case, just facts of life (in its eternal aspect).

This was not Susan Sontag's sense of the matter when she declared Arbus an "anti-humanist" and general public enemy in the first chapter of her 1976 book, *On Photography*, where she scolds:

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A Jewish giant at home with his parents in the Bronx, NY, 1970
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"Arbus's work does not invite viewers to identify with the pariahs and miserable looking people she photographed. Humanity is not one." She goes on to ask: "Do they see themselves, the viewer wonders, like *that*? [i.e., acceptingly] Do they know how grotesque they are? It seems as if they don't."

Sontag herself didn't seem to know how grotesque *she* was at such a moment, how like one of Arbus's big-haired, purse-lipped, veiled beldames. But to answer her question: No, they don't know how grotesque they are, because grotesquery, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder. They probably think they're beautiful, or at least presentable. That's what Arbus is showing us: how we present ourselves, how every face we see on the street is a mask, and how every mask is a message to be decoded.

If Arbus is to be reprehended, it must be on some other basis than inhumanity. Many of her critics have argued that she trespasses on her subjects' right to privacy, and in the excellent catalogue to the show (Random House, $50 in paperback), Arbus, writing to a magazine editor, is quoted to this effect: "The releases are sometimes a problem: if people are grand enough they have learned never to sign anything and if they are degraded enough they can't. . . . Tuesday I saw a man lying on the steps of a church on Lex Ave under a sign saying Open for Meditation and Prayer with his fly open and his penis out. I couldn't ask him to sign a release, could you?"

Her dilemma epitomizes the camera's central position in the debate on the "right to privacy." If something happens in a place where passersby may view it legally, isn't its photographic image in the public domain? Must we now live our lives as though always in view of surveillance cameras? My own inclination is an unqualified yes; but a world of such radical transparency (where one could google the annual income of anyone one knew) would send all civil libertarians to the barricades. Arbus is the Cassandra and the Evangelist of such a post-private society, and that is why she gives those like Sontag the willies.

Jean-Michel Basquiat (1960-1988), the *wunderkind* of the New York art world in the boom-time of the '80s, is having a full-scale retrospective of his own at the Brooklyn Museum (thence to Los Angeles and Houston). Along with Chatterton, Van Gogh, and Arbus herself, Basquiat was one of the art world's legendary suicides. The Basquiat catalogue and its PR materials try to minimize that side of his legend (a press release speaks of "his untimely death") but it is rather hard, in his case, to blink it away. As with Sylvia Plath, much of his best work takes the form of an all-but-overt suicide note, with graffiti skulls as profuse as flowers in May, and repeated tributes to his primary role model, Charlie Parker, another artist who died by a drug overdose. In such cases, it is not unfair to regard an artist's suicide as a career move, one calculated to preclude the possibility of burnout (already under way for Basquiat at age 27) and a collapse of his auction prices. An early death is the best hedge against the ill effects of too prolific production, and part of ambition's Faustian bargain.

In many ways, Basquiat is more interesting as a case study in reputation-building in the art market than for the actual art he created, which can either register as pleasant and deft or as callow and even brain-damaged. Basquiat put himself on the map as a New York City graffiti artist, after the fashion of Keith Haring, but his work in that vein consisted chiefly of his "tag," Samo, and dull, self-aggrandizing mini-manifestos, such as SAMO AS AN END TO BOOSH-WAH-ZEE FANTASIES and THIRD WORLD TRICKED BY CHRISTIANITY. At his best he reinvented *art brut* with a *frisson* of the ghetto, as though he were signing Michael Jackson for the deaf. At his worst you might think that your five-year-old elephant could produce paintings of equal intelligence and formal panache. As with Warhol, the only arbiter of his final merit is the auction house and its related machineries, of which this retrospective is an instance. My advice: sell. ♦

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Books in Brief

***P. G. Wodehouse* by Joseph Connolly (Haus, 150 pp., $15.95)** In the acknowledgments of his mini biography of P. G. Wodehouse, Joseph Connolly complains that the Wodehouse estate refused him permission to quote any of The Master's words. This would appear to be a serious stumbling block for a biographer whose subject poured all of his genius directly into his writing.

What was so great about the writing is, however, a little hard to formulate. Wodehouse's books did not succeed on the strength of a writing style as usually understood. The masterly manipulation of the language that makes, for example, Nabokov's prose so richly poetic was not Wodehouse's thing. And though he seems to be the type of writer who should have produced one-liners by the thousand, because he did write so many funny lines, his style was not very aphoristic. Rereading some of his most famous books turns up precious few examples of great stand-alones. The choice of individual words and the inflections within sentences were often ingenious, but the greatness seems to have lain in the writing's overall tone and, to use a term borrowed from the textbook industry, ease of reading. Once beguiled into a Wodehouse story, the reader zips through it effortlessly.

Since I, unlike Connolly, enjoy the right to a little quotation, why not let 'er rip? It being still spring, I'll cite a short opening passage from one of Wodehouse's relatively under-celebrated golf stories to illustrate the clear-as-a-songbird tone.

> It was a morning when all nature shouted 'Fore!' The breeze, as it blew gently up from the valley, seemed to bring a message of hope and cheer, whispering of chip-shots holed and brassies landing squarely on the meat. The fairway, as yet unscarred by the irons of a hundred dubs, smiled greenly at the azure sky; and the sun, peeping above the trees, looked like a giant golf ball perfectly lofted by the mashie of some unseen god and about to drop dead by the pin of the eighteenth.

Connolly has done something worthy, which is to provide the interested reader with a precise life of ole Plum in just the kind of breezy style one feels compelled to use when writing about Wodehouse. But while the tone is right, the information is needlessly thin in spots. Connolly, for example, mentions that, in revising, Wodehouse would cut out all of his very best stuff. This detail demands further discussion, but none is forthcoming. In another oblique reference to craft, Connolly mentions that Wodehouse had concluded that "every line in a Jeeves story has to tell." How this makes a Jeeves story different from a Psmith story or a story written by someone not named P. G. Wodehouse I am not sure. Connolly, unfortunately, does not use any of the space made available by the Wodehouse quotes he cannot use for explication.

—David Skinner

***The New New Left: How American Politics Works Today* by Stephen Malanga (Ivan R. Dee, 156 pp., $22.50)** With judicial wars, stem cell legislation, and the Oil-for-Food investigation dominating the headlines recently, it's appropriate that Stephen Malanga is offering a fresh reminder that all politics is local. In his new book, Malanga focuses on this concept, and notes that the reality of this phrase may cause conservatives headaches for years to come, because of the ascendancy of what he calls "The New New Left."

While the nation's political persuasion may be shifting right, Malanga theorizes that political discourse is now based upon those who thrive off larger government (the New New Left) versus those who pay the burden of the government expansion. In Malanga's words, it's "the tax-eaters versus the taxpayers." Unfortunately, the tax-eaters are winning the battle. These tax-eaters (public sector employee unions, subsidized social service groups, radical left-wing organizations, etc.) have overtaken metropolises such as Baltimore, San Francisco, and New York. These various networks of organizations have established themselves as de facto political clubs that pursue policy initiatives that seem altruistic, but in reality are about placing supporters in politically connected jobs.

Malanga writes concisely about a wide variety of subjects, whether Wal-Mart or the New York City Council. *The New New Left* probably is, however, more policy-wonkish than its targeted audience. Nonetheless, *The New New Left* is filled with surprising facts and cogent analysis that should fulfill the desires of those who want to know more about today's political climate.

—Jordan Fabian

Great Moments in Acknowledgments

"Jennifer Joel—my agent who has supported me since day one and persistently found a way to make this book see the light of day.

"Josh Behar—my fabulous editor. Thank you for always seeing beyond the bulls***. You never once doubted me or anything you read, even if we had to delete it.

"Beth Silfin—my attorney at HarperCollins. I truly appreciate all the time you invested in making this book happen.

"Seale Ballenger—publicist extraordinaire. He is always one step ahead of me, providing as much compassion as expertise. . . ." *—From Jennifer Saginor's* Playground: A Childhood Lost Inside the Playboy Mansion

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Washington Post Parody

THURSDAY, JUNE 2, 2005

Prices may vary in areas outside metropolitan Washington. (See box on A2.)

Post Source Revealed

'Deep Throat' Unveiling Ends 33-Year Mystery

By CARL BERNSTEIN
Washington Post Staff Writer

1150 15th STREET NW — In what historians are calling the most important event since the death of Washington Post owner-publisher Katherine Graham in 2001, The Washington Post has learned that the identity of "Deep Throat," the celebrated Watergate-era confidential source for legendary Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, has been publicly revealed for the first time since the newspaper's Pulitzer Prize-winning coverage of the Watergate scandals. (The text of the Pulitzer committee's citation for the Post's 1973 Gold Medal for Public Service may be found on the Post website.)

Woodward and Bernstein's reporting on the Watergate scandal, which led directly to the resignation of President Richard M. Nixon in August 1974, and the conviction and imprisonment of several senior Nixon administration officials, was later expanded into a best-selling book, *All the President's Men*, which was also a Book of the Month. Three years after its publication, the Woodward-Bernstein classic became a popular motion picture that is still used in history classes and journalism courses as an example of what moral courage, exemplary reporting, and the support of editors and owner-publishers can accomplish in a democracy. Jason Robards won an Academy Award for Best Supporting Actor in 1976 for his portrayal of Post editor Benjamin Bradlee.

At an impromptu reception in the Post newsroom yesterday, presidential historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. gave the Post, and reporters Woodward and Bernstein, credit "not only for affirming that ours is a nation of laws, not men, but saving the country from its gravest threat since the creation of the Republican party in 1854."

Historian Doris Kearns Goodwin, reached by telephone in her study in Cambridge, Mass., agreed with Professor Schlesinger that "the lessons of Watergate are to be ever-vigilant against abuse of power, to recognize the paramount importance of a free and unfettered press, and to value the contributions of editors and owner-publishers in preserving American democracy."

"Those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it," added Goodwin.

Post reporters first learned that the identity of "Deep Throat" might be publicly revealed when magazine editor Graydon Carter, attending a social event in Paris, encountered Post Assistant Managing Editor Bob Woodward, who was taking a well-earned vacation at his *pied a terre* in

See LEGENDARY, *A5, Col.1*

News Shocks French, World

By BOB WOODWARD
Washington Post Staff Writer

PARIS — French President Jacques Chirac, in his first press conference since the stunning defeat of the proposed European Union constitution in a referendum, surprised reporters by claiming that its unexpected rejection "pales in comparison with this extraordinary news from Washington."

"The identity of 'Deep Throat' is not only a matter of world-historical importance, it solves a mystery that has bedeviled students of history for a generation," the embattled president said.

Waving away questions about his reversal at the polls, the resignation of Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin, and the future of the E.U., Chirac said that "to be perfectly honest, my favorite—how you say—suspect was always Alexander Haig, because he has those beady little eyes and jumpy manner and a certain 'je ne sais quoi' that seem to suggest what we call in French a *'pigeon du Tabouret.'*"

BY HOUSTON HOLMES IV — UPI

Chirac: All France stunned by Post news.

Meanwhile, in an exclusive interview with former French President Georges Pompidou, the Post has learned that President Richard Nixon, whose abuse of office inspired Deep Throat to confide in a free and unfettered press, once told his French counterpart that he did not believe the confidential source was a member of the White House staff, "but someone in the government, yet outside the administration, male, married with children, and probably Jewish." Mr. Pompidou, who died in the same year that Nixon resigned, was quick to add that he listened to Nixon's musings "as a courtesy to a fellow head of state" and that he did not necessarily share the president's

Analysis

And I was there

By RICHARD COHEN
Washington Post Staff Writer

I happen to know Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein.

I don't say this out of any sense of certitude or self-aggrandizement, but I put the fact on the table as a measure of my relative status in the order of things and, if the truth be told, my (admittedly modest) participation in the most important news story of my lifetime and, if the historians are to be trusted, in the life of this experiment in democracy called the United States of America.

At first, to be honest, I found it difficult to believe that this confidential source—nicknamed for a pornographic film, no less—could be anything other than a sinister device by which that most cynical of men, Richard Nixon, was corrupting the one institution I love, and have loved, more than anything in the world: The Washington Post. Like most Americans of my era, I wanted desperately to believe that the President of the United States, the Leader of the Free World, was not a carpet-chewing head job intent on erasing the language of the Constitution. But, as I say, I know Woodward and Bernstein. And I was old enough to have seen Gary Cooper in "High Noon," the brave, courageous sheriff

Media Notes

One Mystery Still Remains: How Great?

By HOWARD KURTZ
Washington Post Staff Writer

1150 15th STREET NW — The wire services, the anchor booths, even the blogosphere were crackling with electrical charges yesterday over the news that the identity of Woodward and Bernstein's "Deep Throat" had been exposed, ending a 33-year mystery.

But the one question that kept rising to the surface, even in the hostile world of talk radio, was a basic one: How great a newspaper is The Washington Post?

It turns out that the Post's distinction depends very largely on whose ox is being gored. Critics of the Post, and of the perceived "left-wing bias" of the mainstream press, generally agree that the Post, while occasionally committing errors, remains a newspaper of extraordinary quality and depth.

"We're a human institution," said editor Leonard Downie Jr., "and being human, we make mistakes. But on balance, there has never been a newspaper quite like The Washington Post in terms of fairness, excellence, devotion to a free and unfettered press, and good fortune in its reporters, editors, and owner-publisher."

Admirers of the Post have a different perspective. Independent analyst Haynes Johnson, who has written extensively about the press and democracy, insisted "that you would have to look back to the medieval papacy, or maybe the Roman empire, to find such importance and influence." While conceding that the Post and its editors and owner-publishers, like the medieval popes and Roman emperors, are not without blemishes, "I would argue that, unlike popes and potentates, the power exercised by the Post throughout its history has been, almost exclusively, for the good of mankind."

That's no accident, said E.J. Dionne Jr., senior fellow at the nonpartisan Brookings Institution and a fierce defender of integrity in

See TIMES-HERALD, *A7, Col.1*

the weekly Standard
JUNE 13, 2005

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I have often told students in my Media Law and Ethics class that even as a professional journalist I consider myself lucky for having attended law rather than journalism school. Journalists are trained to appreciate facts, whereas lawyers demand evidence. A journalist might print or broadcast information that a lawyer would never dream of introducing as evidence because the court would hold that its prejudicial impact exceeds its probative value.

That seemed to me the basic problem with the *Newsweek* telescope item predicting that a military investigation would conclude that Guantanamo Bay interrogators had flushed one detainee's Koran down a toilet. Even if true, the item revealed no pattern of religious or even Koran abuse, no widespread breakdown in troop discipline in contrast to the disgraceful military conduct at Abu Ghraib prison, no systemic excess as with the alleged deaths of twenty-seven Iraqis while in U.S. custody. The 300-word piece was thus of negligible probative value. Nevertheless, it packed enormous prejudicial impact; that the story was false added a touch of irony to the tragedy of deadly riots in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

The real Koran story in Iraq has nothing to do with mistreatment of the book. Rather, it has to do with crimes against humanity committed in Iraq every day inspired by the Prophet's word. In the name of redeeming Islam, jihadists steal across Iraq's borders intent on murder, kidnapping, and other acts of barbarism. Together with homegrown insurgents, they plant bombs along heavily traveled roads, attack schools and marketplaces, seize and murder civilians, target the country's infrastructure, and blow themselves apart after penetrating the largest crowds of innocents they can find.

Their enemies are democracy, modernity, equality for women, cultural licentiousness, and any version of religion save their own. The qualities they hate most are embodied in the United States, a nation of diversity, tolerance, and the secular rule of law. Many jihadists are armed spiritually with the latest fatwah licensing their deed, extolling their sacrifice, praising the blow they have struck against enemies of Allah, assuring them a place in heaven.

Even more to the point, where are the Islamic dissenters? Where are those who we are told represent the sweetness of the Koran, its inner humanism, the jihad connoting the struggle of the soul for virtue rather than the thirst of the warrior for death? **Where, in short, are the voices of Islamic enlightenment?** And why do the most prominent among them speak so often from London and so rarely from Riyadh, Cairo, Tehran, Damascus, or even Amman.

The real story of Koran debasement is there for the telling, much of it in Iraq where the media are better able to shelve their propensity to disparage the U.S. effort, more often treating atrocity as operational success than as evidence of the insurgents' inhumanity. Perhaps, as some suggest, the media's mind-set harkens back to Vietnam with its phony body counts and spurious claims of progress. I disagree. Rather, it was the failure to find weapons of mass destruction coupled with planning errors allowing the insurgency to gain traction after the war was "won" that created a media environment polluted with cynicism and mistrust. In such an environment it is easy for facts to get in the way of evidence.

—Robert Zelnick

Robert Zelnick is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and chairman of the Department of Journalism at Boston University.

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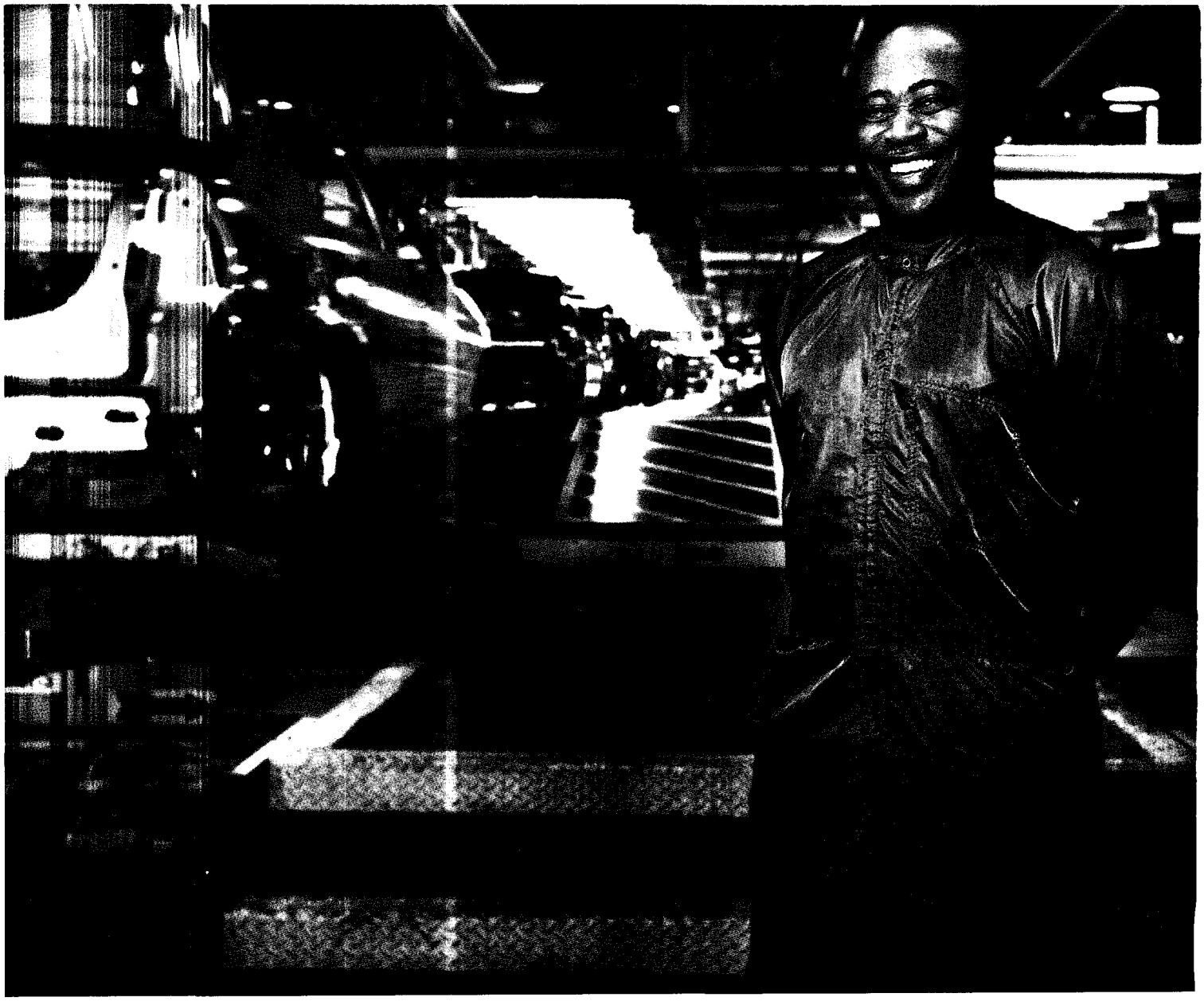

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